



**COLORADO FARM TO SCHOOL  
TASK FORCE  
LEGISLATIVE REPORT, 2013-2014  
JANUARY 2015**

## LEGISLATIVE HISTORY

In 2010, the Colorado General Assembly passed Senate Bill 81, the “Farm-to-School Healthy Kids Act.” Once signed into law by the Governor, this bill created the Interagency Farm to School Coordination Task Force (Task Force), a 13-member body with representatives from schools, parents, producer organizations and state agencies. In 2013, the General Assembly reauthorized the Task Force and created two additional seats (Senate Bill 153). For a complete list of current members, see Appendix A.

The Task Force is charged with *increasing the use of local farm and ranch products in school food service programs to improve child nutrition and strengthen local and regional agricultural economies.*



**Governor Hickenlooper signs the Task Force Reauthorization bill into law, March 22, 2013**

*From its inception, the Task Force has had a “bias for action,” identifying, pursuing, and implementing opportunities to grow farm to school all across the state of Colorado.*

## FUNDING

The Task Force has no fiscal impact on the state of Colorado. The Task Force has successfully acquired federal and foundation grants to support its work and hire professional staff from Spark Policy Institute (Spark). In 2011, the Task Force was funded through a \$50,000 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act stimulus grant administered by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE). In 2012, The Colorado Health Foundation (TCHF) granted the Task Force \$105,370 to continue and expand its work. During its first two years, the Task Force landed additional project-specific grants to support local partner projects and address statewide issues and barriers. The total of the additional funding was \$68,417.

In 2013, TCHF and Gates Family Foundation each awarded three year grants (2013-2016) to the Task Force for a total of \$460,689. In addition, the Task Force was awarded a two-year USDA Farm to School (FTS) grant (\$98,880) to expand their FTS Evaluation Toolkit and develop and conduct webinar trainings (*see Appendix B for more detail on current funding*).

# ACCOMPLISHMENTS DURING 2013-2014

## TASK FORCE PROCESS

With support from Spark, the Task Force developed a *Roadmap* in February 2011. In 2013, the Roadmap was updated to reflect the knowledge learned in the first two years and the work to be done in response to the recommendations in the 2013 Legislative Report. The Roadmap is the guiding document for the Task Force. It identifies how the Task Force's legislative charge combines with the conditions and preconditions that must be met in order to reach the goal of **"collaborative, sustainable implementation of farm to school statewide."**

## Seven Major Farm to School Gaps Addressed by the Task Force

1. Provide regional outreach and TA to create/expand FTS programs.
2. Maintain, improve, and expand the FTS Information Hub through compiling existing resources and developing new resources to:
  - a. Assist producers
  - b. Assist schools
  - c. Assist distributors
  - d. Empower parents and students
  - e. Empower communities
  - f. Provide a peer networking environment
3. Identify and share food-focused education.
4. Provide information and build support and public will for FTS.
5. Support evaluation and collection of comparable data to document outcomes of FTS.
6. Collaborate with local, state, and federal agencies and organizations to create permanent support for FTS.
7. Assess local, state, and federal barriers and opportunities and develop policy guidance.

The Roadmap (*see Appendix C*) provides structured guidance on how each of the gaps will lead to establishing the conditions needed to have farm to school statewide. Each year, the Task Force engages in specific activities to address the gaps. There were five major areas of work undertaken in 2013-2014.

### The Work of the Task Force, 2013-2014

- I. Internal development
- II. Policy and regulatory analysis and guidance
- III. Outreach and technical assistance
- IV. Pilot projects
- V. FTS evaluation

## I. INTERNAL DEVELOPMENT

The passage of the reauthorization bill (SB13-153) continued the Task Force indefinitely, added two new seats (a producer selling to schools, and a K-12 teacher/principal), and the ability to offer ex-officio status. During the summer of 2013, the Task Force created several internal processes laid out in its By-laws. Members are now appointed for three year terms, renewable once. The Chair and Vice Chair hold a one year term, renewable twice. Both are mandated to sit on the Core Team, which meets monthly.

In 2013, to identify and recruit new members to the Task Force, announcements of the open seats were made through press releases by the Colorado Departments of Agriculture, Education, and Public Health. In addition, everyone on the Task Force's email distribution lists was notified. An online application was available on the Colorado Farm to School website ([www.coloradofarmtoschool.org](http://www.coloradofarmtoschool.org)). Twelve applicants applied for the four open seats. After reviewing applications, Task Force members called applicant references. There were two extremely strong candidates for one of the seats, so the Core Team of the Task Force conducted interviews with the applicants. Four new appointments were made by the end of 2013. In addition to the 15 appointed members, the Task Force brought on 10 ex-officios, about half of whom were previous Task Force appointees and half who were selected through the application process. The ex-officios have proved to be productive members of the Task Force as well. For example, one ex-officio developed the social media campaign for the Task Force and writes blogs about FTS in Colorado. *The list of current members and ex-officios is included with this report (Appendix A).*

## II. POLICY & REGULATORY ANALYSIS AND GUIDANCE

Federal, state and, local laws and regulations govern the operation of FTS for local school districts and local producers. This regulatory environment can be confusing, duplicative and contradictory, and act as a barrier to the procurement and purchase of local foods for school meals. To help producers and school food service directors better navigate complex laws and regulations, the Task Force creates easy-to-understand guidance in the form of "Frequently Asked Questions," "Just the Facts –Please," Prezi presentations, and decision tree flow charts. All materials developed by the Task Force are available on the FTS Information Hub website at <http://coloradofarmtoschool.org/docs-media/policy-guidance/>. In the first two years (2011-12), the Task Force produced twelve policy products. During 2013-14, the Task Force's Policy and Regulatory Analysis Working Group released six documents and four webinars:

### Food Safety

1. *Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) regulatory analysis* of proposed Produce Rule as it pertains to Farm to School:
  - Partnered with School Food FOCUS to educate food service directors about the FSMA Produce rule and help FOCUS develop a response, which was submitted during the first round of federal comment period in 2013.
  - Craft and submit a separate Task Force response during the first round of the federal comment period that focused specifically on farm to school impacts.
    - Outcome: FSMA revised Produce Rule reflects the changes to all the issues brought up by both School Food FOCUS and the CO FTS Task Force.

2. *School Food Service Directors: A Flow Chart to Assess On-Farm Food Safety in Farm to School Programs* (Dec. 2014). A two page flow chart with yes/no answers to federal on-farm food safety regulations of importance to school food service directors. This flow chart was updated to reflect the Produce Rule requirements as of Fall 2014.
3. *Food Safety Webinar Series* in partnership with Healthy Farms, Healthy People Coalition (<http://hfhpcalition.org/2013/11/04/farm-to-school-food-safety-web-forums-archive/>). The four 60 minute webinars were all produced during National Farm to School Month, October 2013.



*Webinar 1. Farm to School Food Safety Project*

This webinar provided an in-depth look at a comprehensive review and analysis of the statutory and regulatory structure of agricultural policies as they relate to farm to school in Colorado, with a specific focus on the interconnectedness of federal mandates on state regulatory structures and local county health regulations related to food safety.

In this webinar, attendees learned about four specific resources from the project – each targeted for specific audiences: policymakers/regulators, public health, school food service directors, and producers. In addition, the speakers discussed how Colorado’s resources can be used as a template for other states to undertake their own comprehensive analysis and why they should do it.

*Webinar 2. Food Safety Modernization Act, the Produce Rule, and Farm to School*

This webinar provided an overview of the Food Safety Modernization Act and explored how the proposed produce rules could facilitate or hinder farm to school efforts. While much had been said about the proposed rule’s impact on specific types of producers, this webinar uniquely considered the farm to school implications from the producer and the food service director’s perspectives. Panelists included national agricultural food safety specialists, a legal analyst, and farm to school research staff.

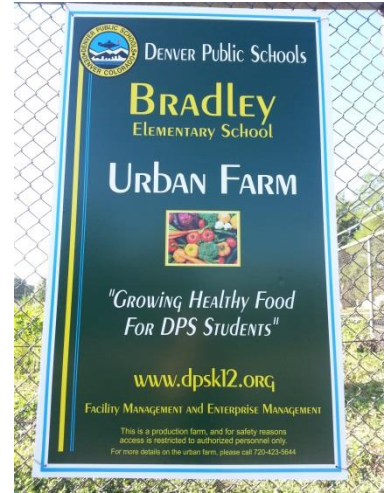
*Webinar 3. Farm to School and the Cost of Food Safety*

This webinar presented findings from a study by the Oregon Public Health Institute that investigated the cost of food safety measures among a sample of small and medium sized Oregon growers participating in the United States Department of Agriculture’s Good

Agricultural Practices & Good Handling Practices Audit Verification Program (USDA GAP&GHP). Participants heard from public health officials, producers, and school food service directors as they discussed the barriers and how to overcome them.

#### *Webinar 4. Food Safety, Urban Farming, and Farm to School*

In this webinar, attendees learned how one of the largest school districts in the country is creating a farm to school program using acres of their own land. Denver Public Schools identified 25 acres that can be farmed. In 2013, three acres were under production, providing affordable organically-grown and oh-so-local vegetables to its schools. There are many issues a school district must address when growing their own food. First and foremost is food safety. This webinar introduced the innovate school farming project AND discuss the food safety issues associated with urban farming, whether existing regulations adequately address the issues, and how Denver Public Schools partners with Extension to ensure food safety in the farming, harvesting, and transport processes while not overburdening the farmers of these small urban plots.



### **50 state scans to identify legislative methods that support FTS:**

4. *Colorado Farm to School 2013 Legislative Trends* (Jan. 2013). Posted on CO FTS website and CDPHE COPrevent website.
5. *State Farm to School Legislative Trends: Fifty-State Scan of Relevant Legislation – November 2013-October 2014* (Oct. 2014). A 50 state scan covering nine topical areas relevant to FTS. Posted on the Task Force's website and CDPHE COPrevent (CDPHE's Prevention Services Division website: <http://www.coprevent.org/>).
6. Briefing paper, *Legislative Survey of State Producer Grants for Local Food, FTS or Food Safety Certification* (Oct. 2014). A 50 state scan of state funding and cost-share programs to help farmers with the expenses related to on-farm food safety audits and food safety infrastructure investments. Posted on the Task Force's website and CDPHE COPrevent
7. Fact Sheet, *A Review of the Health and Economic Impact of Locally Sourced Food in School Meals and State Incentive Programs for Local Food Producers* (Dec. 2014). A combination of research and legislative scans to educate the public and policymakers on the health and economic benefits of farm to school and the legislative methods by which states have supported local producers to meet the food safety requirements of local institutional buyers such as schools. The document is posted on CO FTS website and CDPHE COPrevent website.

### **III. OUTREACH AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

The Task Force is known around the state through its extensive outreach and technical assistance efforts. In addition to its statewide work, the Task Force has developed strong national partnerships that have brought new resources to Colorado's efforts. Colorado has emerged as one of the leaders in farm to school nationwide, providing input to the USDA FTS Team about evaluation, indicators, and census

questions. In 2014, Colorado was identified by SeedStock as one of the top ten successful farm to school programs in the country.<sup>1</sup>



Task Force Quarterly Meeting, Fresh Pack, Broomfield, CO, November 2014

## Regional and National Outreach

### *Quarterly Meetings*

The Task Force engages stakeholders statewide through its quarterly business meetings and community listening sessions. During 2013-2014, the Task Force traveled to Carbondale, Fort Collins, Alamosa, Pueblo, Denver, Salida, and Broomfield.

### *Statewide Partnerships*

The Task Force has strong Colorado partnerships with the statewide groups including the Colorado Food System Advisory Council, Livewell Colorado, Colorado Foundation for Agriculture, Rocky Mountain Farmers Union, Guidestone, CSU Extension, Real Food Colorado, and the Colorado School Nutrition Association.

### *Regional and Local Partners*

The Task Force has developed relationships with regional and local partners, including regional food policy councils (Roaring Fork, San Luis Valley Local Foods Coalition, Denver Sustainable Food Policy Council, La Plata Food Policy Council), local food organizations including Slow Food Denver, Valley Food Partnership, Mountain Roots Food Project, Denver Urban Gardens, Northern Colorado Food and Agriculture Coalition.

*I have to tell you all that I have never seen such hard work from an all-volunteer Task Force in all my travels. I have been so impressed with the work of the Task Force and the dedication of its members to supporting farm to school in our state.*

Hillary Fulton, The Colorado Health Foundation, speaking to the members of the Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems

<sup>1</sup> Seedstock works with government agencies, municipalities and public sector stakeholders to address issues of economically viable local food systems across the country.

## National Partners

In addition, the Task Force engages organizations across the country working to improve school food, local purchasing, and food safety, including School Food FOCUS; National Farm to School Network; USDA Farm to School, Edible School Yard Project; Winrock International/Wallace Center; ChangeLab Solutions; and Healthy Farms, Healthy People Coalition. States around the country contact the Task Force for guidance on how to start up or improve upon their FTS efforts.

## National Outreach

- **USDA FTS Grantee National Gathering**, Austin, TX, April 14, 2014
  - *Understanding the Impact of Farm to School Programs* (Task Force: Jewlya Lynn). Opening Plenary with Matt Russell, USDA FTS Team.
  - *Evaluation +: Strategies for Evaluating Farm to School Programs* (Task Force: Lyn Kathlene). Workshop presentation on evaluation best practices and review of tools.
- **National Farm to Cafeteria Conference “Powering Up”** was held in Austin, TX, April 15-18, 2014. The Task Force and its staff were presenters or trainers at sessions throughout the week:
  - *State-Level Farm to School Models: How It Happens, How to Do It* (Task Force: Krista Garand, Lyn Kathlene). Leaders involved in state level farm to school efforts from across the country provided an overview of diverse advocacy efforts that lead to farm to school legislation. In small groups, participants developed an advocacy strategy for passing legislation that best fits their environment. Speakers were from Colorado, Montana, Oregon, Washington, and Vermont.
  - *Minimizing Risks and Removing Obstacles in School Gardens* (Task Force: Andrew Nowak). Safety and liability concerns are a major obstacle for many school garden programs. Four presenters from Oregon, Arizona and Colorado shared a collaboratively developed systems approach to help minimize risks and remove perceived obstacles to serving food safely from a school garden. The presentation included a startup school garden guide, volunteer and student training, weekly and yearly checklists, and food safety protocol templates.
  - *Denver Public Schools Urban Farms: Developing school-based farms to expand the district’s ability to increase procurement of locally grown food* – Lightning Talk (Task Force: Julia Erlbaum)
  - *Colorado Farm to School Task Force* – Poster Session (Task Force: Julia Erlbaum, Krista Garand, Lyn Kathlene)
  - *Farm to School Evaluation Toolkit* – Poster Session (Task Force: Andrew Nowak, Sophie Oppenheimer)
- “Healthy Flavors, Healthy Kids.” *Culinary Institute of America National Leadership Summit*, May 6-8, 2014. Task Force: Jeremy West.
- *USDA FNS StrikeForce* Roundtable, June 11, 2014. Task Force: Jeremy West, Sophie Oppenheimer.



- *Sustainable Agriculture and Food Systems Funders* annual forum, June 17-19, 2014, Denver, CO. Task Force: Theresa Hafner, Andrew Nowak, Julie Moore, Jeremy West, Shaina Knight, Kristin Tucker, Mike Womochil, Lyn Kathlene.
- “Colorado’s Farm to School “Policies in Practice: Nurturing Healthier Food Choices from Schools to Communities.” *National Center for State Legislatures (NCSL) conference*, July 22, 2014, Denver, CO. Task Force: Jeremy West; with the Honorable Joyce Elliott (Arkansas State Senator).
- “Colorado’s Farm to School Experience.” *North American Agricultural Marketing Officials (NAMMO)*, July 28, 2014, Denver, CO. Task Force members: Shaina Knight, Andrew Nowak, Anthony Zamora, Theresa Hafner, Lyn Kathlene.
- Denver Green School garden tour. *North American Agricultural Marketing Officials (NAMMO)*, July 28, 2014, Denver, CO. Task Force members: Andrew Nowak, Theresa Hafner.
- “FTS Evaluation.” *Heritage Radio: Inside School Focus* online radio interview, October 13, 2014. Task Force: Lyn Kathlene; with Anupama Joshi (National Farm to School Network).  
<http://insideschoolfood.com/episode/farm-school-program-evaluation/>



- “Farm to School Evaluation Toolkit: Empowering Advocates to Improve and Promote their FTS Activities.” *American Evaluation Association* annual conference, October 17, 2014, Denver, CO. Task Force: Lyn Kathlene, Sophie Oppenheimer.

### *Regional, State and Local Outreach Presentations*

- “Farm to School and Local Foods.” Keynote at the annual awards dinner of the *Northern Colorado Dietetics Association*. January 16, 2013. Presentation by Task Force: Jeremy West and Julie Moore.
- “Resources for Colorado Producers Interested in Farm to School.” *Governor’s AG Forum*, February 14, 2013. Task Force: Wendy White, Jeremy West, Julia Erlbaum, Lyn Kathlene.
- “Farm to School.” *Wyoming FTS Workshop*, February 15, 2013. Task Force: Jeremy West.
- “How the Colorado Farm to School Task Force Supports Agriculture.” *Colorado AG Leadership Program*, February 16, 2013. Task Force: Lyn Kathlene.
- “Farm to School Food Safety Issues.” *Rocky Mountain Food Safety Conference*, May 22, 2013. Task Force: Andrew Nowak, Lyn Kathlene; with Sadie Mele (USDA-Food and Nutrition Services) and Danika Lee (Denver County Environmental Health)
- “Supporting Farm to School through Community Partnerships.” *Healthy Schools Leadership Retreat*, June 14, 2013. Task Force: Lyn Kathlene; with JoDee Powers (LiveWell Montezuma) and Shelly Allen (St. Vrain School District).



- “Update on Colorado Farm to School.” *Colorado Department of AG Commissioners* meeting, June 11, 2013. Task Force: Wendy White and Julie Moore.
- “Overview of the Colorado Farm to School Task Force.” *Colorado Foundation for Agriculture Teachers’ Summer Institute*, June 24, 2013. Task Force: Wendy White.
- “Colorado Farm to School Task Force.” Presentation at the *Colorado Vocational Agricultural Teachers Association (CVATA)*, June 24-26, 2013. Task Force: Mike Womochil.
- “Local Sourcing in State Agencies.” *Local Food Think Tank*, June 25, 2013. Task Force: Theresa Hafner; with Jenniver Cassanova (Purchasing, City of Denver).
- “Farm to School Evaluation Toolkit Workshop.” *Public Health in the Rockies Conference*, September 18-20, 2013. Task Force: Andrew Nowak, Lyn Kathlene.
- “Colorado Farm to School Intensive Technical Assistance Workshops: Lessons Learned and Opportunities to Participate.” *LiveWell Colorado Food Systems webinar series*, October 10, 2013. Task Force: Julia Erlbaum, Lyn Kathlene; with Kristin Kirkpatrick (Bellisimo).
- “Healthy Food, Healthy Children: How Farm to School Programs Lead to Better School Food and How to Get Started.” *Colorado Association of School Boards*, December 6, 2013. Task Force: Theresa Hafner and Julie Moore.
- “Colorado Farm to School Task Force.” Presentation at *Guidestone’s Annual Land Link Forum*, March 6-7, 2014. Task Force: Jennifer Visitacion.
- “Farm to School in Colorado.” Presentation to *CU Dining Administrators*, March 10, 2014, Boulder, CO. Task Force: Lauren Heising.
- “Farm to School.” Presentation to *Front Range School Food Service Directors*. March 13, 2014. Task Force: Jeremy West.
- “The Work of the FTS Task Force: Resources and Activities to Support Food Service Directors.” Presentation to the staff of the *Office of School Nutrition, Colorado Department of Education*. March 13, 2014. Task Force: Ashley Moen and Lyn Kathlene.
- “Farm to School Task Force.” Presentation to the joint meeting of the *Wyoming Masters Gardeners and Farmers Associations*. March 14, 2014. Task Force: Andrew Nowak.
- “Farm to School in the Transformation of School Food Culture.” *Colorado Parent/Teacher Association (PTA) Annual Conference*, April 12, 2014. Task Force: Andrew Nowak.
- “FTS Task Force and How FTS is Making a Difference for our Children.” *Arvada Rotary Club*, April 22, 2014. Task Force: Kristin Tucker.
- *Producer Cultivation Event* at Weld RE-6, May 24, 2014. Task Force: Anthony Zamora, Jeremy West.
- FTS Task Force and Evaluation Toolkit – display table at the summer conference of the *Colorado School Nutrition Association*, June 16-19, 2014.
- “Farm to School in Colorado.” Poster session at the *Public Health in the Rockies annual conference*, September 18, 2014. Task Force: Lyn Kathlene.

- “Food Safety in Farm to School Procurement.” Presentation to *Boulder County Public Health*, September 2014, Boulder, CO. Task Force: Lauren Heising.
- “How to Build a FTS Program.” Presentation at the *Consumer Issues Conference*, University of Wyoming, October 9, 2014. Task Force: Jeremy West.
- “Fed Up.” *Sustainable Food Movie Series at the Denver Botanic Gardens*, November 7, 2014. Panel discussion with Task Force: Leo Lesh, Julie Moore, Lyn Kathlene and Sophie Oppenheimer.



Jeremy West, nutrition service director of Weld County 6 School District and FTS Task Force member, stands in his central production kitchen.

### News Articles

- “School Districts put Local Beef on the Menu.” *EdNews Colorado*, January 22, 2013. <http://bit.ly/1EG9FPa>
- “Workshop Connects Teaching to School Gardens.” *Post Independent*, May 5, 2013. <http://bit.ly/1wvbl2x>
- “Denver School Farms Help Stock Cafeterias.” *EdNews Colorado*, August 2, 2013. <http://bit.ly/1yGtFAB>
- “Larimer County Participates in Colorado Farm to School Project.” *Coloradoan*, August 20, 2013. <http://noconow.co/1CEuPOz>
- “Farm to School.” *Farming Fort Collins*, September 12, 2013. <http://bit.ly/1JBXlek>
- “Getting in on the Conversation.” *Farming Fort Collins*, November 10, 2013. <http://bit.ly/1BYd8KY>
- “Food Hub Event Thursday at Fort Lyon.” *AG Journal*, March 21, 2014. <http://bit.ly/1tbABoE>
- “Food Hub Possibilities Explored.” *BC Democrat*, March 28, 2014, <http://bit.ly/1ydWlqc>
- “Food Hub Possibilities Explored.” *La Junta Tribune*, March 28, 2014, <http://bit.ly/1EGaRSM>
- “Colorado’s Farm to School Take Root, But Challenges Still Abound.” *KUNC*, April 18, 2014, <http://bit.ly/1pFk9cu>
- “Southeast Colorado Possible Location for Food Hub.” *High Plains/Midwest AG Journal*, April 21, 2014, <http://bit.ly/1xQvcA1>
- “Guidestone, LiveWell, R-32-J Collaborate with Farm to School.” *The Mountain Mail*, June 18, 2014. <http://bit.ly/1uIZ6uq>



Potential food hub producers and buyers tour Fort Lyon Supportive Residential Facility, March 25, 2014. Photo by Joe Zemba.

- “10 Successful Farm to School Programs Across the U.S.A.” *SeedStock*, July 3, 2014. <http://bit.ly/1uIDTRn>
- “In Quest to put more Local Foods in Schools Cafeterias, District Treads New Ground.” *Chalkbeat Colorado*, July 21, 2014. <http://bit.ly/1JmKsw2>
- “School Food Reform: Introducing the Colorado Farm to School Task Force.” *5280 Magazine*, August 2, 2014, <http://bit.ly/1JBWQqi>
- “Farm to School.” *5280 Magazine*, August 2014, <http://bit.ly/1AUkICP>

*School districts across the state are incorporating more local ingredients into their menus. Colorado Proud School Meal Day is the perfect opportunity to educate school children about the importance of agriculture and nutrition.* Shaina Knight, CO Department of Agriculture, and CO FTS Task Force Member.

### *Events*

**Colorado Proud School Meal Day.** Each year, Colorado celebrates its agricultural bounty in school cafeterias across the state. This year on September 10, 2014, over 80,000 children participated in Colorado Proud School Meal Day. The Colorado Department of Agriculture’s marketing division provides a wealth of resources to support this event, including linking schools to farmers, providing chefs to create recipes and do taste tests with the children, and a variety of marketing materials – posters, signage, and stickers. In addition, the Task Force provides resources for schools to take the next steps to build a farm to school program. The Task Force knows from its research over the years that Colorado Proud School Meal Day is often the important first step that schools take in their journey to develop a farm to school program.<sup>2</sup>

## **Social Media**

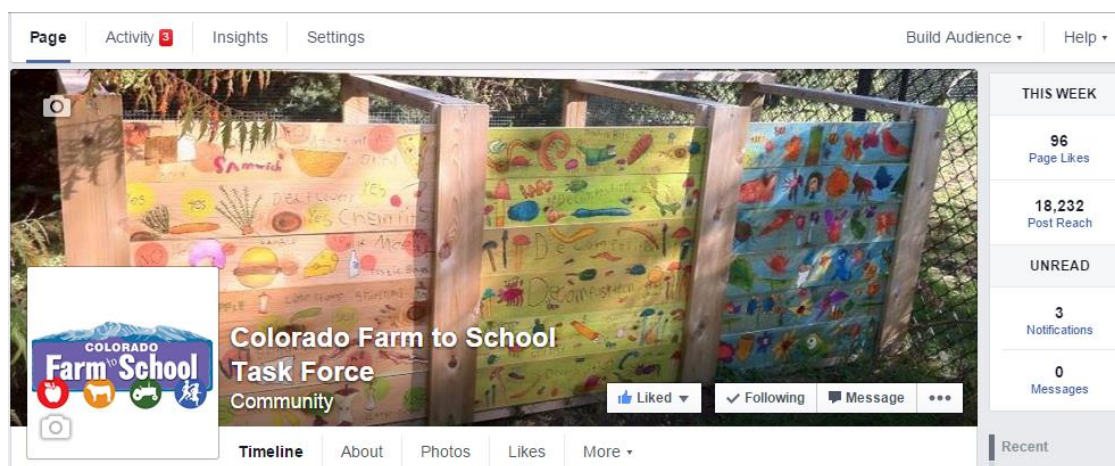
### *Twitter*

On July 9, 2014, the Task Force began “tweeting.” This form of social media is a great way to keep people updated in real time about important information and activities of the Task Force, such as posting pictures and information from tours of farm to school activities around the state, and announcements about upcoming meetings and trainings. Follow the Task Force at @COFarmToSchool

<sup>2</sup> For more pictures and facts about the event, see the CDA Prezi presentation at <https://prezi.com/qlgjykr916m4/wednesday-september-10-2014/>

## Facebook

The Task Force launched its Facebook page on June 12, 2014. Every week new people “like” and follow the postings of the Task Force. Importantly, its postings are being shared widely, reaching thousands of people. Like the Task Force at <https://www.facebook.com/COFTS>.



## Technical Assistance

With a three year grant from the Gates Family Foundation, the Task Force along with Real Food Colorado is able to offer FTS Intensive Technical Assistance (ITA) Workshops to communities throughout the state. The ITA workshops are developed with a local planning committee specifically formed to prepare for the two days of FTS workshops. The ITAs held in the last two years were:

### *Garfield County (May 9-10, 2013) – Five ITA Workshops*

1. [Connecting School Gardens to Curriculum](#)

Interactive workshop to share how school gardens fit in farm to school programs, how classroom teachers can use a garden to teach science, math, literacy, and health with example lesson plans. The workshop was followed by a tour of the Roaring Fork High School greenhouse and outdoor gardens.

2. [Why Farm to School Matters](#)

Farm to school values and beliefs presented by the Roaring Fork Food Policy Council. Overview of farm to school programs in Colorado.

3. [Get Connected on Colorado Market Maker](#)

Hands-on session to create a farm to school profile on the statewide virtual local food marketplace platform for producers, schools, restaurants, and other businesses interested in making local food connections.



Larimer County "Local Happenings" ITA Workshop, January 2014.

4. FTS for Small Districts

Best practices shared by small Colorado school districts for school food service directors and staff, producers, and local partners.

5. FTS Evaluation Toolkit

Hands-on workshop to learn why and how to evaluate farm to school activities, get started on an evaluation plan, and learn how to use the toolkit.

*San Luis Valley (November 18-19, 2013) – Three ITA Workshops*

1. San Luis Valley Stakeholder Session

An interactive session that offered a unique opportunity for the San Luis Valley local food community members to share and articulate current local food efforts as well as map identified next steps into a “work plan.” This work plan was designed by participating stakeholders based on community criteria such as need, value, readiness, impact, and other factors.

*Stakeholder Interactive Group Discussions:*

- Identifying Farm to School and Institution Challenges
- Immediate Next Steps
- Long Term Goals
- Resources Needed

2. Farm to School in the New Meal Pattern

A collaborative work session that focused on how FTS supports the New Meal Pattern (NMP). As part of the presentation, Task Force school food specialists provided resources and methods of application to incorporate the Valley’s local food ingredients in school meals. Resources included USDA FNS’ approved menus featuring ingredients available in the Valley and local food resources readily available in the Valley.



3. Farm to School 101 for Small Districts

Provided insight into key components supporting and advancing local sourcing in institutional meal programs. The session focused on applying geographic preference, utilizing local food bids, understanding on-farm food safety issues and garden to cafeteria food safety protocols.

*Larimer County (January 31, 2014) – Four ITA Workshops*

1. Larimer Local Happenings

Presentations from Fort Collins Food Cluster provided insight into the local food activities supporting a deeper connection in the local food supply chain. The Task Force presented a statewide lens that provided an overview on various FTS programming. This session included breakout groups to identify Larimer county’s next steps in their FTS journey.

2. Evaluation Toolkit Workshop

Hands-on workshop to learn why and how to evaluate FTS activities.

3. School Garden Workshop – Utilizing the School Garden to Foster a Healthy Relationship between Children and Food

Hands-on workshop addressing critical areas that are essential in supporting school gardens including the pursuit of sustainability, gardens in health and wellness education, and a wealth of resources.

4. Producer and Institution Engagement – Best Practices from the School District and Food Purchasing Programs with Local Producers

Sourcing for farm to school – the highs and lows from the perspective of the Poudre School district and regional producers.



Anthony Zamora, Leffler Family Farms, CO FTS Task Force member

*Chaffee County (July 8, 2014) – Four ITA Workshops*

1. Local Food in Rural Communities

How rural communities can develop a regional food system that supports their unique needs and increase the ability to access more local foods. This session focused on three key items:

- Regional procurement
- Managing growth and next steps in current programs
- Network development with other communities to share resources

2. Farm to School Evaluation Toolkit

The Farm to School Evaluation Toolkit is a resource that helps farm to school programs of all sizes conduct evaluation. Evaluation can serve many purposes for FTS programs, including demonstration of a program's success or progress. Evaluation information helps districts better communicate their FTS program's impact to funders, parents, school leadership, and other stakeholders. The toolkit training workshop walked participants through the steps of an evaluation, providing specific guidance and data collection tools. Implementation technical assistance was available post-workshop to attendees.

3. Safety First: Addressing Food Safety from Farm to Cafeteria

Food safety is the number one concern food service directors cite when considering local food sourcing. This workshop included a hands-on review, guidance and tutorial for on-farm food safety, Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP) development, and other food safety measures for producers and school food buyers who are exploring how to get products from the ground to institutional cafeterias.

#### 4. Food and Agriculture in School Curriculum

An interactive workshop addressing a broad integration of Farm to School and local food production in school curriculum with activities that provided a hands-on approach to how educators and programmers can leverage local food and agriculture to support core multi-curriculum from K-12.



Longfellow Elementary 3rd graders harvest carrots for Healthy Foods

### *San Miguel County (October 11, 2014) – One ITA Workshop with Four Topical Components*

#### 1. San Miguel Local Food Community Session

An important foundation of developing a local food roadmap is gather key stakeholder within the regional community to participate in a facilitated discussion to identify the current landscape of local and regional food and farm to school efforts, as well as identify immediate to long term goals to support its regional food system. This session included:

- Local Happenings and Perspective in the San Miguel Region
- School Food
- Farmers' Market
- Developing Local Distribution

## IV. PILOT PROJECTS

The FTS Task Force supports and promotes pilot projects, as a method of investing in innovation and expansion of FTS efforts in Colorado.

### **Purpose of the pilot project approach:**

- To help further and evaluate the effectiveness of multiple models (e.g., school and/or producer food hubs, producer co-ops, enhanced online marketing) to accelerate FTS across the state;
- Models represent different scale, geography, products, facilities, procurement processes, etc.;
- To build public visibility via outreach efforts associated with pilot projects;
- To provide a foundation for development of local, state, and national policy and practices; and
- To inform the broader policy context.

### **Promotion of pilots to:**

- Create, expand, diversify, or promote food safety, production, processing, marketing, and distribution of food produced in this state for sale to schools in this state;
- Create, expand, or renovate facilities, including purchases of equipment for the facilities that would ensure the use of food produced in this state in schools in this state;

- Provide, expand, or promote training for food service personnel, farmers, and distributors;
- Provide, expand, or promote nutritional and agricultural education in the classroom; and
- Provide, expand, or promote school, producer, or community-based food hubs.

The Task Force has helped guide or support FTS pilot projects through endorsements and grant-seeking, including efforts in Durango, Montrose, Gunnison, Greeley, Denver, and Colorado Springs. Two Colorado school districts were awarded USDA 2014 FTS grants: Durango School District 9-R and Boulder Valley School District.

1. **Durango School District 9-R (La Plata County):** The project is taking an existing space within the Durango School District and repurposing it into an aggregation center to service the Durango School District and four surrounding districts. It will allow access to more nutritious, locally grown foods in meals, allow for larger purchases of local foods, and allow for greater control in inventory, food safety, and traceback. Most importantly, this project will provide the infrastructure necessary to continue to expand the farm to school programming in the southwest. (\$99,998)
2. **Boulder Valley School District (Boulder County):** An implementation grant to undertake an intensive marketing and education program aimed at a 20% increase in consumption of locally-sourced natural foods, particularly fruits and vegetables, in school meals. Marketing and education will involve all schools in the district for two weeks per year, called “Colorado Proud Weeks,” and focus on ten high-poverty elementary and middle schools year-round. These schools serve over 4,000 children ages 3-14, of whom 47% live in poverty households. Activities will include: field trips, farmer visits, tastings, student chef competitions, posters, cooking lessons, garden plantings and harvests, and classroom lessons closely aligned with science and health curriculum. The District will create “how to” manuals on garden to school and farm to school, for extended use by teachers, volunteers, and staff. Partners include local farms, dairies and ranches, grocery stores, farmer’s markets, restaurants, school gardens, a local foundation, the Colorado State University Extension, and district curriculum departments. (\$96,477)

## V. EVALUATION

### Farm to School Evaluation Toolkit

The Task Force identified the need to develop and implement robust evaluations of existing and future FTS projects. It is imperative that Colorado learn which models work best for different areas of the state. In 2012, the Task Force worked with evaluators at the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment and Spark Policy Institute to design evaluation models. A major 2013 product of the Task Force was the *Farm to School Evaluation Toolkit*, a resource to help FTS programs of all sizes undertake evaluation. It provides step-by-step guidance and data collection tools to assess FTS outcomes related to students, parents, teachers, food service staff and operations, producers, school leadership, and community. The Task Force received a USDA FTS grant in 2014 to rollout the Toolkit nationwide and expand its reach across the state of Colorado.



With USDA funding, the Toolkit is now available as an online tool with enhanced guidance, trainings and resources. The expanded Toolkit can be found at <http://sparkpolicy.com/tools/> and on the downloadable version is available on the Colorado Farm to School website, <http://coloradofarmtoschool.org/evaluation-toolkit/>.

### Webinar Training Series

The Toolkit is supported by a webinar training series. The five week series was offered twice in the fall of 2014 and will be repeated twice in 2015. In 2014, there were 315 participants. All webinars are archived and available for asynchronous viewing. To-date, the archived webinars have been viewed 322 times. The series has been very successful (see Appendix D for participant evaluations of the series). Due to its success, USDA Farm to School invited the Task Force and its staff to conduct a webinar on the Toolkit specifically to train its new USDA FTS grantees how to evaluate their programs.

### Sneak Preview: Farm to School Evaluation Made Easy!

Do you want to know how to improve your school garden and/or other farm to school activities? Effectively share your successes with parents, teachers, and administrators? Provide your grant funders with the information to demonstrate your progress? Watch this 30 minute “sneak preview” of the Farm to School Evaluation Toolkit – a FREE resource and training series that makes evaluation easy for non-evaluators. In this preview, you will learn how evaluation can help your farm to school work and find out about the upcoming FREE webinar training series and how to register for it. This webinar and the training series are produced by the

Colorado Farm to School Task Force in partnership with Spark Policy Institute, funded by a USDA Farm to School grant.

### **Webinar #1: Overview & Getting Started on your Farm to School Evaluation**

This webinar covers an overview of the Toolkit's contents and delves into Step 1 of the evaluation plan. Two handouts are used during this training: the *Overview & Steps* and the *Evaluation Plan Template*. This is an interactive training. By the end, participants will have started designing their evaluation plan, specifically identifying their farm to school program element to evaluate, the evaluation purpose, the timeline for conducting the evaluation, identification of existing data, and identification of people to recruit onto their evaluation team. It also provides a brief introduction to informed consent issues in evaluation.

### **Webinar #2: Outcomes, Indicators and Measures**

This webinar covers evaluation outcomes, indicators and measures. It also provides an overview of how a logic model can help in the development of an evaluation plan. This webinar focuses on Step 2 in the *Overview & Steps Guide*. Several handouts are used during this training: the *Evaluation Plan Template* and at least one of the *Toolkit Attachments*. This is an interactive training. By the end, participants will have continued filling out their evaluation plan (Step 2), specifically identifying outcomes they want to evaluate, and linking the activities of their program to the outcomes.

### **Webinar #3: Choosing & Adapting Tools**

This webinar covers types of methods and their advantages and challenges, ways to assess the fit of a question for your evaluation, how to adapt an existing measurement tool, and how to pretest the tool. This webinar focuses on Steps 3 & 4 in the "Overview & Steps Guide." Several handouts are used during this training: the *Overview & Steps* and the *Evaluation Plan Template* and at least one of the *Toolkit Attachments*. This is an interactive training. By the end, participants will have learned how to complete their evaluation plan, specifically identifying the evaluation steps, timeline, and key staff responsible for the evaluation tasks.

### **Webinar #4: Collecting and Analyzing Data**

This webinar covers data collection options, research designs, sampling strategies, and methods to analyze data specific to quantitative and qualitative methods. This webinar focuses on Steps 4 & 5 in the *Overview & Steps Guide*. Several handouts are used during this training: the *Evaluation Plan Template* and at least one of the *Toolkit Attachments*. By the end, participants will have learned how to plan for and implement data collection strategies, and will have an understanding of some basic methods

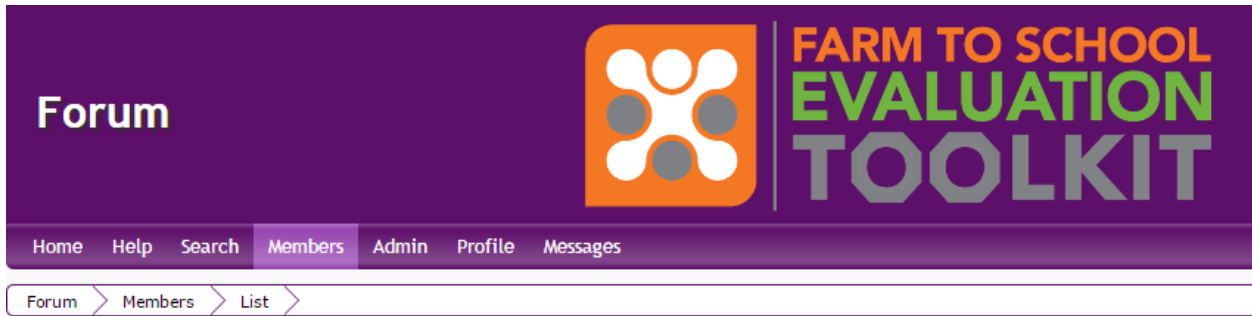
### **Webinar #5: Reporting Results**

This webinar covers considerations about what should be included in report and presentations of evaluation results and which formats are best for different audiences. At the end of the hour, there is a 15 minute "bonus" training about graphics. By the end, participants will have learned

about different ways to present evaluation results, how to fit the formats to the audience, and why and how to create compelling graphics

### Peer-to-Peer Learning Forum

The FTS Evaluation Toolkit and training webinar series is supported through an interactive online forum for users to discuss their farm to school evaluation issues with each other, share data collection tools, and evaluation reports.



## VI. CENTRALIZED INFORMATION HUB

In celebration of National Farm to School Month, the Task Force launched in October 2012 a one-stop shop for all things FTS in Colorado. The *Information Hub* ([www.coloradofarmtoschool.org](http://www.coloradofarmtoschool.org)) brings together a wealth of information and resources that support FTS, and provides a networking space that is critical for producers and schools to overcome the significant start-up costs associated with farm to school implementation.

In 2014, the website averaged 3300 page views per month (110 per day).

### The Information Hub consists of:

- Audience-specific pages for producers, schools, parents & community, and students consisting of well-organized links to other websites with tools/information, and original information/tools;
- A calendar for FTS related events including conferences/ workshops, grant deadlines, Task Force meetings, etc.;
- A daily RSS feed of FTS happenings across the nation;



- A "Current Happenings" page to keep people up-to-date about FTS activities occurring in Colorado;
- A blog for people to share and discuss best practices and their FTS activities;

- Farm to School Evaluation Toolkit and webinar series;
- Farm to School Food Safety Project;
- A grant resource page with direction and links to grant opportunities;
- An “Ask an Expert” Forum where questions can be submitted to a panel of experts comprised of school food service directors, producers, state agencies, and parents working in FTS efforts; and
- Colorado-created resources including: Colorado FTS webinars, policy guidance materials, getting started guidance and trainings, case studies, Colorado Recipe Collection for schools and for families, and an image gallery.

## Popular Downloads

Of the resources developed by the Task Force, the most popular downloads in descending order were:

1. *FTS Just the Facts Please - Producers* (n=1024). Easy to understand brief that provides fruit, vegetable and nut producers with guidance on what they need to know about farm to school and food safety laws and regulations. Includes resources.
2. *FTS Evaluation Toolkit: Attachment 1 – Student Outcomes* (n=862). This attachment provides you with a list of outcomes related to students. These are changes in the students’ attitude, knowledge, behavior, and/or health that can result from farm to school programming. Select those outcomes most relevant to the components of your program. Attachment 1 is to be used with the FTS Evaluation Toolkit – Overview & Steps.
3. *A Farm Food Safety Toolkit: A Nationwide Survey* (n=849). A report on the findings of a 50-state survey of farm food safety initiatives.
4. *FTS Evaluation Toolkit: Overview & Steps* (n=678). The Farm to School Evaluation Toolkit is a resource to help farm to school programs of all sizes undertake evaluation. Evaluation can serve many purposes for your farm to school program, including enabling you to demonstrate your program’s success or progress. Evaluation information you collect allows you to better communicate your program’s impact to funders, parents, school leadership, and other stakeholders. Evaluation can be a tool for you to recruit new funders. It can also be useful for program improvement. The toolkit will walk you through each step of evaluation, providing specific guidance and even the data collection tools.



5. *FTS Evaluation Plan Template* (n=600). This template can be used to develop the specific components of your evaluation plan. To be used with the FTS Evaluation Toolkit – Overview & Steps.
6. *Government Purchasing Preferences that Support Local Farmers: A 50 State Review* (n=538). A 50-state scan of enacted, pending and unsuccessful legislative proposals on local procurement statutes. The report describes six nationwide trends and details Colorado’s current procurement statute governing local food purchases.
7. *The Colorado FTS Cookbook – Schools* (n=363). Fifty yummy recipes created by Colorado school districts using Colorado grown produce. Recipes for 50 servings, full nutrient analysis, and all meet the standards of the New Meal Pattern.
8. *FTS Food Safety: A Review of Agricultural Policies and Practices* (n=354). A comprehensive analysis of food safety in farm to school programming as it moves through the food chain. The report *Farm to School Food Safety: A Review of Agricultural Policies & Practices* is for policy makers, state agencies, school food service directors, and universities involved in agricultural food safety as it relates to farm to school programs.
9. *FTS Evaluation Toolkit: Attachment 4 – Food Services Outcomes* (n=321). This attachment provides a list of outcomes related to food service staff and operations. These are changes in the staff attitude, knowledge, behavior that can result from farm to school programming. It also includes the changes in food service practices and policies that can result from farm to school programming.
10. *FTS Just the Facts Please – School Food Services* (n=287). Easy to understand brief that provides school food service directors with guidance on what they need to know about farm to school and food safety laws and regulations. Includes resources.
11. *The Colorado FTS Cookbook – Families* (n=279). Fifty yummy recipes created by Colorado school districts using Colorado grown produce.
12. *CO FTS 2013 Legislative Report* (n=237). The Task Force’s 2013 report to the Colorado General Assembly summarizes its first two years of work and sets forth recommendations for (1) changes to its composition and charge; (2) future work; and (3) legal, regulatory and guidance changes.

## FUTURE WORK OF THE TASK FORCE

The Task Force has specific activities laid out for the third year of its funding from The Colorado Health Foundation and the Gates Family Foundation, and the last ten months of funding from the USDA Farm to School grant. The work to be done includes:

1. **Targeted Technical Assistance:** Four regional meetings per year hosted in regions with a need and readiness to expand FTS activities that include:
  - FTS-TF quarterly meetings.
  - Community listening sessions.

- Intensive TA convenings, tailored to the readiness/needs of the region at the three convenings in rural areas.
- 2. Building Public Will:**
- Presenting to large and small audiences throughout the state, small group meetings, national conferences, and conference calls with key stakeholders.
  - Three FTS webinars per year to a variety of stakeholders.
- 3. Policy Guidance:**
- Three policy analyses with accompanying school- and producer-accessible materials per year.
  - Dissemination of materials through the Info Hub, FTS newsletter, and regional meetings.
  - Work with local public health and inspection departments to remove differential enforcement.
- 4. Evaluation:**
- Targeted TA to up to five schools/districts per year to implement the FTS evaluation toolkit, focused on the common indicators, including student-level healthy behavior outcomes.
  - In-person evaluation toolkit training workshops at the Classroom Summer Institute for teachers, Colorado Foundation for Agriculture, June 2015.
  - Conduct five-part FTS evaluation toolkit webinar training series twice in 2015:
    - January 2015, hosted by the Wallace Center/Winrock International
    - April 2015, hosted by the Healthy Farms, Healthy People Coalition
- 5. Sustainability:**
- Begin work with the Departments to determine any regulatory or statutory changes needed to sustain FTS capacity and data collection in state Departments.

## **LEGISLATIVE RECOMMENDATION**

### **BACKGROUND**

The CO FTS Task Force has learned through working with school food service directors and producers around the state that a major barrier for schools is the need to ensure producers have farm food safety; yet, school food service directors are not experts on farm food safety. A recent Colorado State University Extension report documents the costs of very small, small, midsize and large farms to become GAP/GHP (Good Agricultural Practices/Good Handling Practices) compliant. Investments in farm food safety infrastructure and training is expensive and especially difficult for small and mid-size farmers to afford.

In addition to the initial farm food safety investments, there are on-going costs associated with farm food safety including disposable supplies required for a school to receive produce as well as cooling and transporting costs associated with deliveries direct to schools.

The Task Force has determined through surveys (its own and the USDA FTS Census 2013), that awareness and demand for farm to school programming among food service directors has grown substantially in just four years. However, the supply of producers who are able and/or willing to sell to schools lags far behind. Food safety and the extra costs incurred by producers to sell to schools are the two major barriers preventing more producers from entering into this marketplace.

The Task Force has kept abreast of farm to school legislation around the country through its 50 state scans as well as through interviews with state agriculture and education departments about their implementation experiences with state-supported farm to school programs and grants.

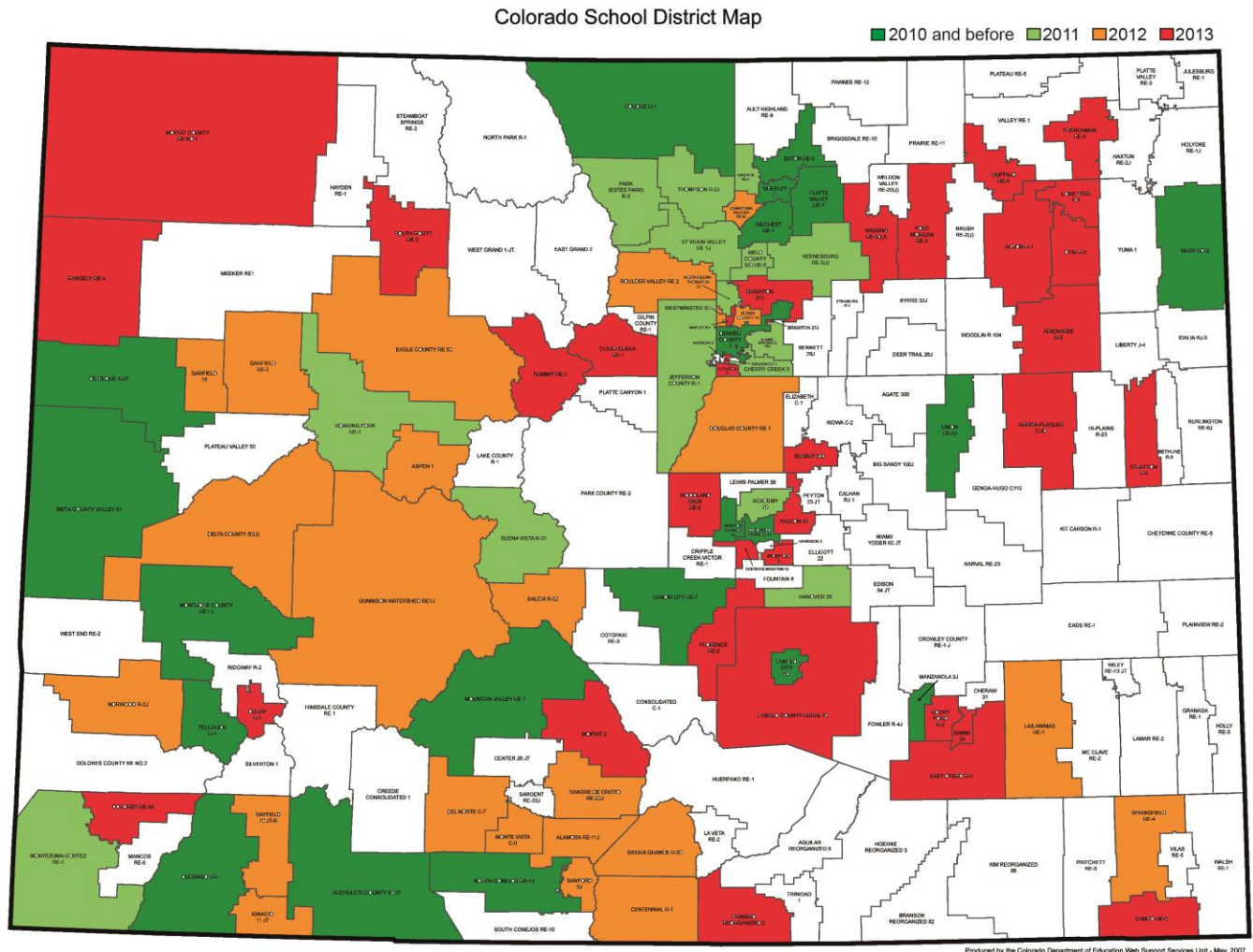
In the fall of 2014, the Task Force determined that for farm to school to grow in Colorado, the focus needed to be on helping producers enter into the school food services market. Therefore, the Task Force recommends that the state:

## **RECOMMENDATION**

The Task Force recommends that the legislature create a five year pilot grant program to support producers who want to sell to schools but are unable or unwilling due to the extra costs associated with school sales. The grant would provide financial cost sharing to cover expenses related to farm food safety investments, transportation, distribution and other costs related to meeting school food procurement requirements.

# FARM TO SCHOOL IS GROWING ACROSS COLORADO

Figure 1. Growth in # of CO School Districts Engaged in FTS, 2010-2013



The work of the Task Force along with its partners has led to an increase in the number of school districts engaged in some type of FTS activity. FTS in Colorado has grown four fold since the Task Force was seated, from 22 public school districts in 2010 to 96 public school districts in 2013. The continued work of the Task Force will expand existing FTS programs and help launch new programs across the state.



## APPENDICES

**Appendix A:** Colorado FTS Task Force Roster

**Appendix B:** Colorado Farm to School Task Force Summary of Activities and Funding Sources

**Appendix C:** Colorado Farm to School Task Force Roadmap

**Appendix D:** Evaluation Results of the FTS Evaluation Toolkit webinar series

## APPENDIX A

### COLORADO FARM TO SCHOOL TASK FORCE MEMBERS, 2014



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## APPENDIX B

### COLORADO FARM TO SCHOOL TASK FORCE SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES AND FUNDING SOURCES

In 2013, the Task Force landed two three-year grants from The Colorado Health Foundation and the Gates Family Foundation. In addition, the Task Force with Spark Policy Institute landed a two-year USDA Farm to School grant. Table 1 below summarizes the source of cash grants and awards received for the period March 2013- April 2016.

Table 1. Summary of CO FTS Task Force Grants and Leveraged Funded Projects, 2013-2016		
Source	FTS Project	Amount
<b>The Colorado Health Foundation grant, fiscal agent Colorado Foundation for Public Health and the Environment (CFPHE)</b> (Mar 2013 – Feb 2016)	Years 3-4 staffing, working group activities and product development, national conference travel, materials.	\$460,191
<b>Gates Family Foundation, fiscal agent Colorado Foundation for Public Health and the Environment (CFPHE)</b> (May 2013 – April 2016)	Conduct Intensive Technical Assistance workshops in nine regions around the state (three per year).	\$150,000
<b>USDA Farm to School grant</b> (Dec 2013 – October 2015)	<i>Farm to School Evaluation Toolkit</i> expansion: National rollout through in-person workshops at national convenings and webinar training series. Includes four hours of free technical assistance to twenty sites using the Toolkit.	\$98,880
<b>TOTAL Cash Grants &amp; Awards</b>		<b>\$559,221</b>

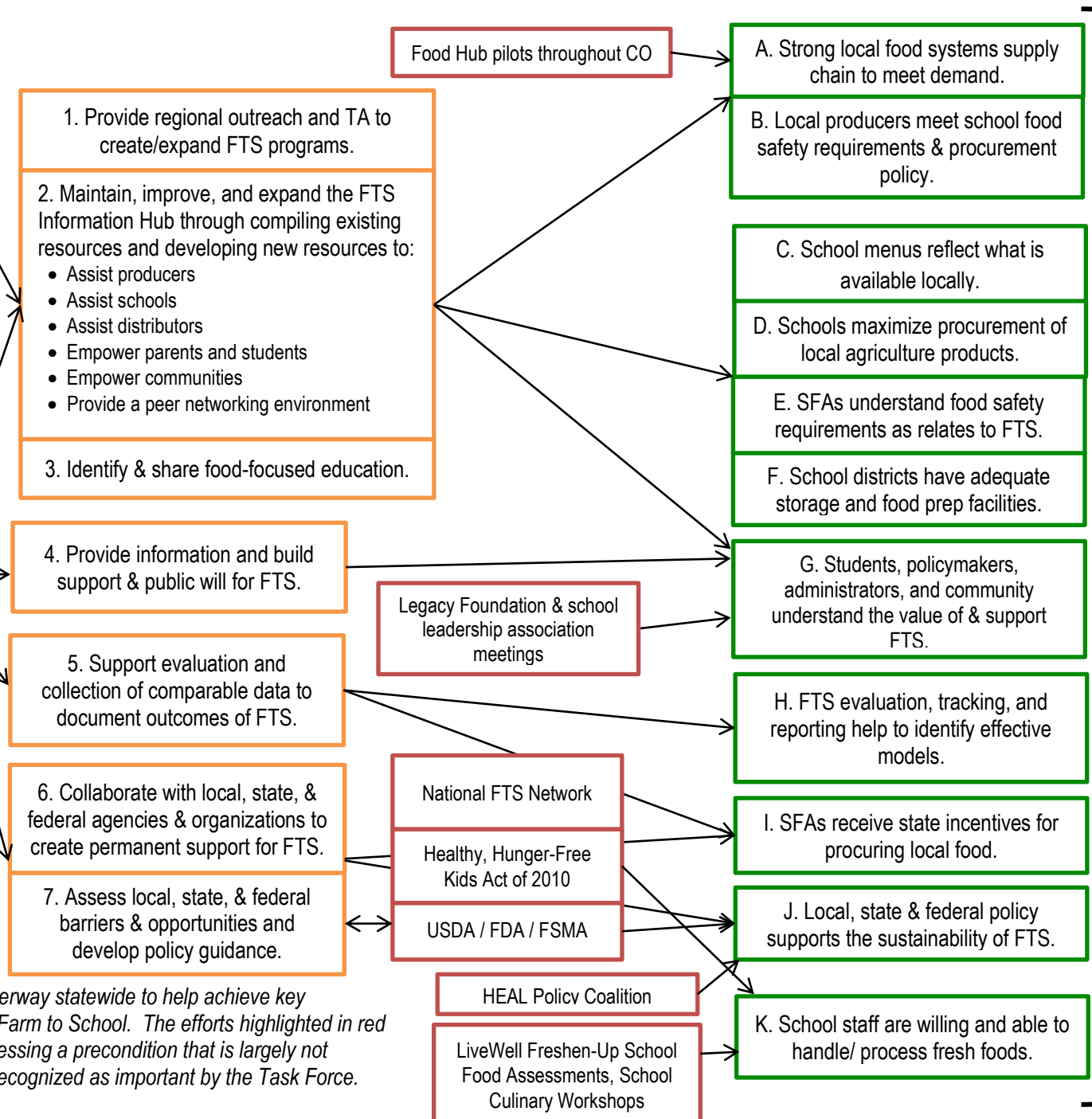
## APPENDIX C

### THE COLORADO FARM TO SCHOOL TASK FORCE ROADMAP, 2014

# Colorado Farm to School Task Force: Roadmap, July 2014

Updated on 07/09/2014

- Mandate:**
- **Pilots:** Advise/create/expand FTS and/or food focused education programs.
  - **Producers:** Develop, design, & make available training for producers on marketing, crop production, post-harvest handling of crops, food safety, business management, liability and risk management, contracting, and processing.
  - **Food Services:** Assist school food services to establish procedures, recipes, menu rotation, proper handling, preparing, storing, and other internal processes.
  - **Facilities:** Inform school districts on methods for improving facilities.
  - **Funding:** Identify funding sources/grants for SDs.



## LEGEND

- Orange box: Activities of the Task Force
- Red box: Activities of other groups
- Green box: Preconditions to achieving the vision
- Purple box: Statewide vision for Farm to School

- ### Acronyms
- CO = Colorado
  - FDA = Food & Drug Administration
  - FSMA = Food Safety Modernization Act
  - FTS = Farm to School
  - HEAL = Healthy Eating & Active Living
  - SFAs = School Food Authorities
  - TA = Technical assistance
  - USDA = U.S. Department of Agriculture

**Note:** Many other activities are underway statewide to help achieve key preconditions to implementation of Farm to School. The efforts highlighted in red boxes represent those groups addressing a precondition that is largely not addressed by the Task Force, but recognized as important by the Task Force.

# Appendix D

## Farm to School Evaluation Toolkit Webinar Training

### Participant Evaluation of the Series

**Spark Policy Institute and the Colorado Farm to School Task Force**

Lyn Kathlene, Ph.D.

Sophie Oppenheimer, MS, MPH





## USDA FTS GRANT

The USDA FTS grant is specific to the nationwide rollout of the Colorado Farm to School Evaluation Toolkit created by Spark Policy Institute on behalf of the Colorado Farm to School Task Force. The national rollout is occurring through two methods: in-person workshops at national venues and four five week webinar training series.

### The Farm to School Evaluation Toolkit

The **Farm to School Evaluation Toolkit**, created by the [Colorado Farm to School Task Force](#) and [Spark Policy Institute](#), is a resource to help farm to school programs of all sizes, in all states, undertake evaluation. Evaluation can serve many purposes for farm to school programs, including enabling implementers to demonstrate program success or progress. Evaluation information collected allows users to better communicate program impact to funders, parents, school leadership, and other stakeholders. Evaluation can be a tool to recruit new funders. It can also be useful for program improvement.

The FTS Evaluation Toolkit provides simple, straightforward information about how to design and implement evaluations of school gardens and other farm to school activities. In a succinct ten pages, the FTS Evaluation Toolkit Guide walks users through each step of the evaluation process, including how to prepare for an evaluation, identify outcomes, select and adapt measurement tools, complete an evaluation plan, implement an evaluation plan, and use evaluation results.

### The Farm to School Evaluation Toolkit Webinar Training Series

The FTS Evaluation Toolkit Webinar Training Series is a free five-week webinar training series that guides participants through the evaluation process and provides them with knowledge and tools to implement evaluations of FTS programs. Each webinar runs for one hour and covers a specific evaluation topic, including Toolkit Overview and Evaluation Plan Design; Outcomes, Indicators, and Measures; Choosing and Adapting Tools; Collecting and Analyzing Data; and Reporting Evaluation Results. Upon completion of the webinar series, participants will have a better understanding of the evaluation process, the resources needed to undertake an evaluation, and access to tools to implement an evaluation.

### Webinar Development & Logistics

The series of five weekly 60 minute webinar trainings were developed and implemented, including webinar polling questions to engage audience throughout the hour, pre-series and post-series surveys, and weekly post webinar surveys.

Webinar #1: Overview & Getting Started on Your Farm to School Evaluation

Webinar #2: Outcomes, Indicators, & Measures

Webinar #3: Choosing & Adapting Tools

Webinar #4: Collecting & Analyzing Data

Webinar #5: Reporting Results

A Google Group was created for all webinar participants for peer-to-peer learning as well as to interact with the trainers (Spark Policy Institute). Continuing Education (CE) credits were pursued and received from Metropolitan State University – Denver and the Commission on Dietetic Registration. We are currently in the process of acquiring CE credits from the School Nutrition Association. Outreach was conducted to recruit hosts for each of the series. Series 1 (September 4 – October 3, 2014) was the Edible School Yard Project. Series 2 (October 23 – November 20, 2014) was LiveWell Colorado. Series 3 (January 6 – February 3, 2015) will be the Wallace Center and Series 4 (April 2015, dates TBD) will be the Healthy Farms, Healthy People Coalition.

Webinar participants are eligible for up to four hours of free technical assistance from Spark Policy Institute. One participant from Series #1 has requested TA, which has been provided through phone calls and emails.

### Post-Webinar Survey Results

A total of 61 people registered for Series #1 and 101 people registered for Series #2. As shown in the follow two figures, the webinar audience was diverse, ranging from garden leaders and community partners to researchers/evaluators and public health practitioners. For both series, the majority of participants were leaders of a Farm to School support organization.

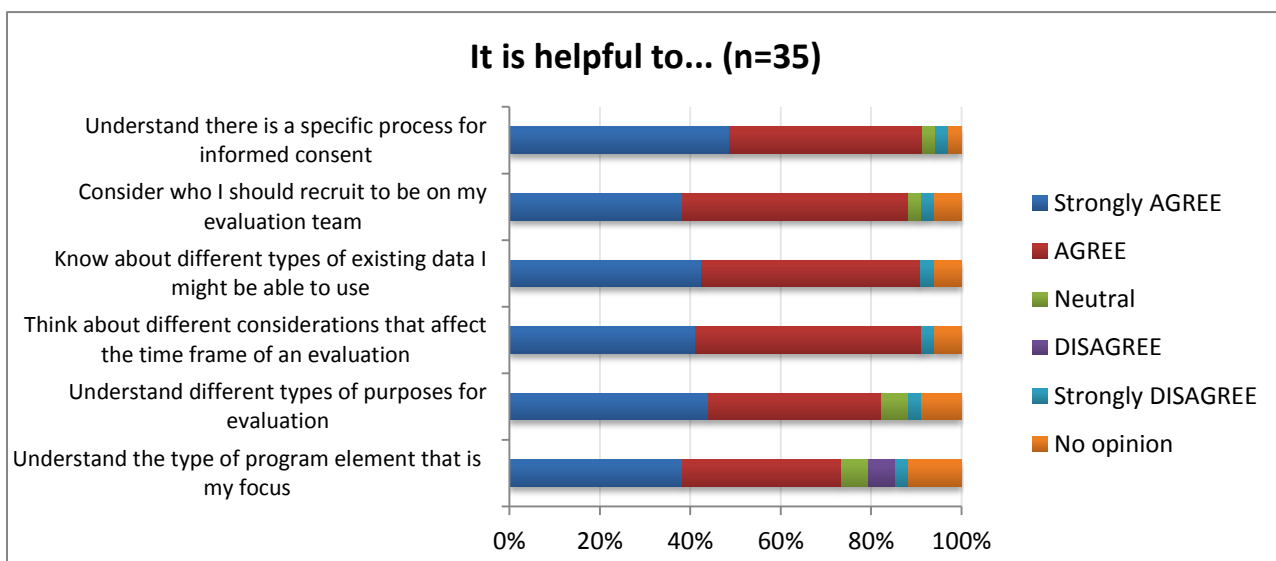




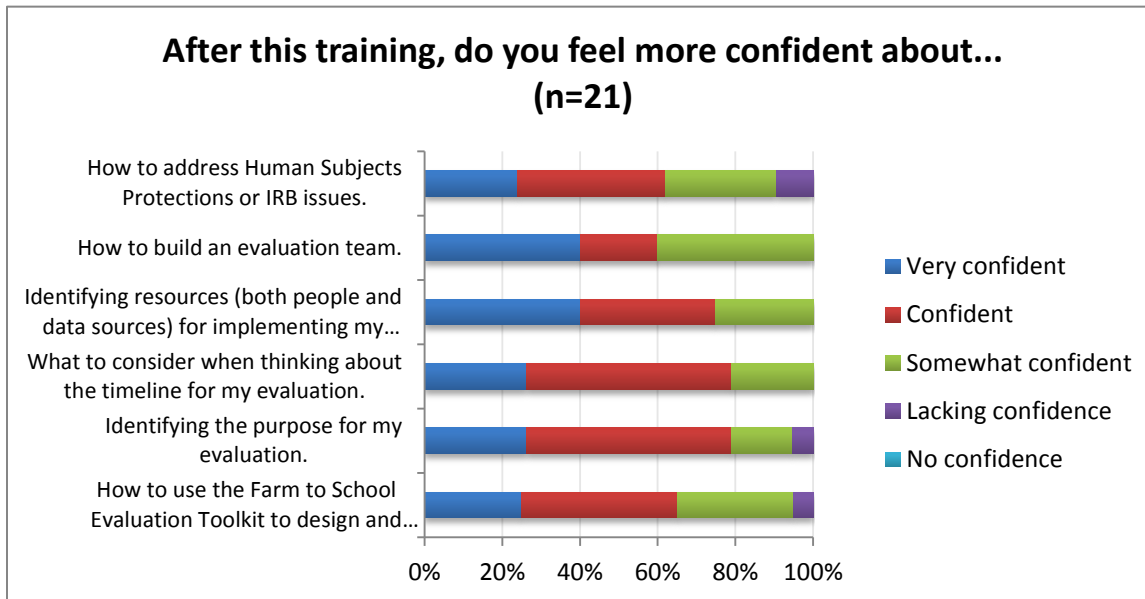
The majority of participants (32%) have been doing FTS for 1-2 years; most (38%) plan to start evaluating activities in the Fall 2014; 43% have been a participant in non-FTS evaluations and 16% have participated in a FTS evaluation. Also, 44% have helped implement a non-FTS evaluation in the past and 27% have helped implement a FTS evaluation in the past. After each webinar, participants were directed to a post-webinar survey to provide feedback on what they learned and how the webinars could be improved.

### Webinar 1 Post-webinar Survey Results

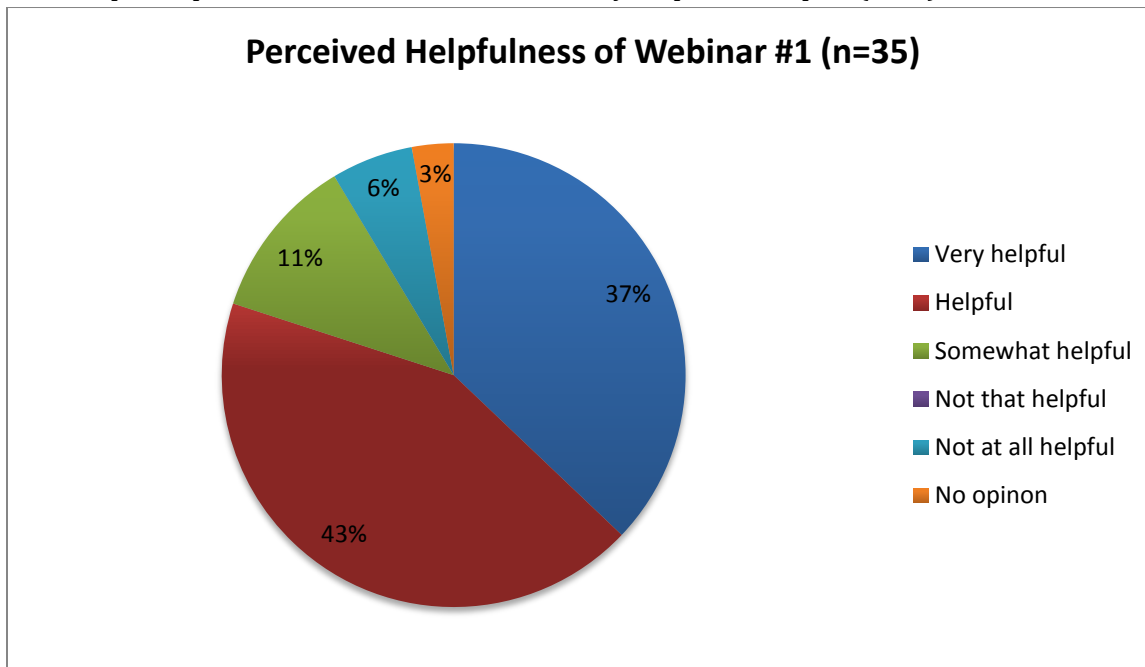
As shown in the figure below, most participants found the various topics of Webinar #1 helpful (indicated *strongly agree* or *agree*), especially knowing about different types of data to use and different considerations that may affect the timeframe of an evaluation.



The following figure shows that participants felt most confident about how to build an evaluation team, identifying resources, and what to consider when developing an evaluation timeline. Relative to other topics, participants lacked confidence around addressing IRB issues.

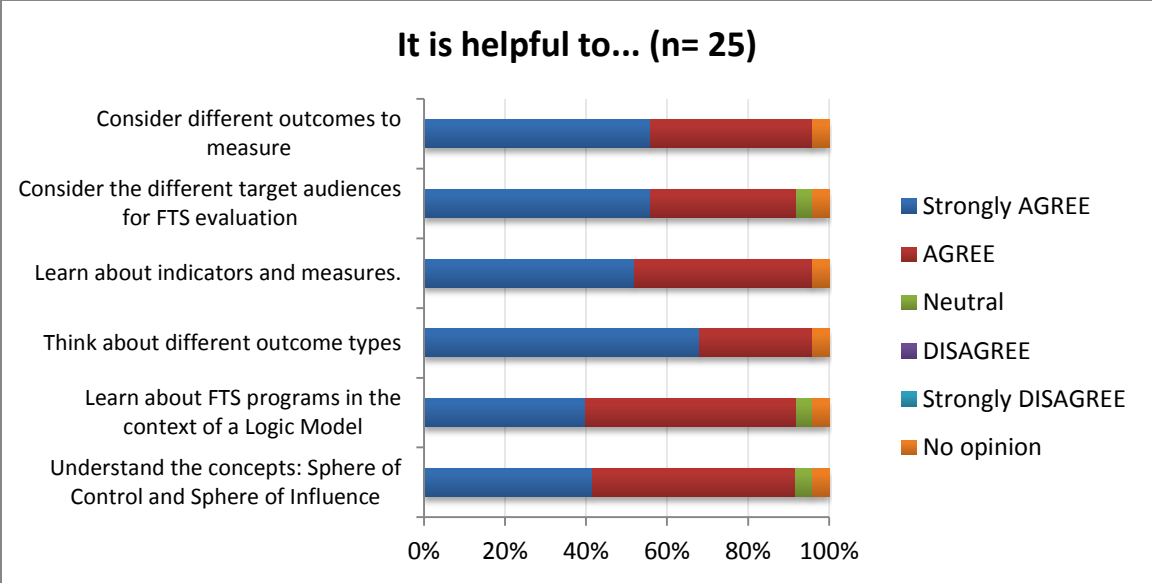


Overall, participants found Webinar #1 to be very helpful or helpful (80%).

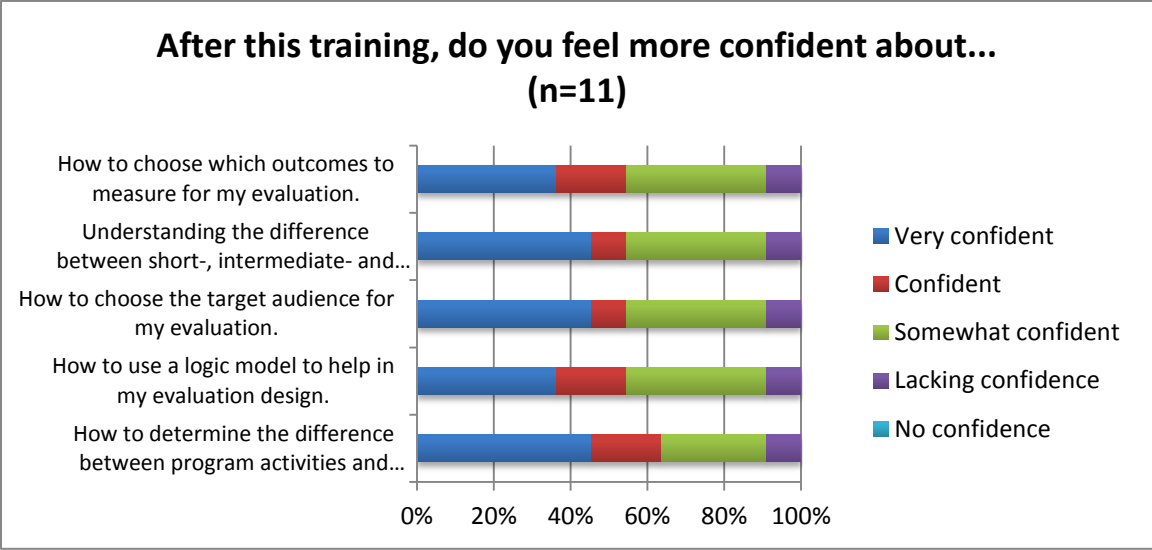


### *Webinar 2 Post-webinar Survey Results*

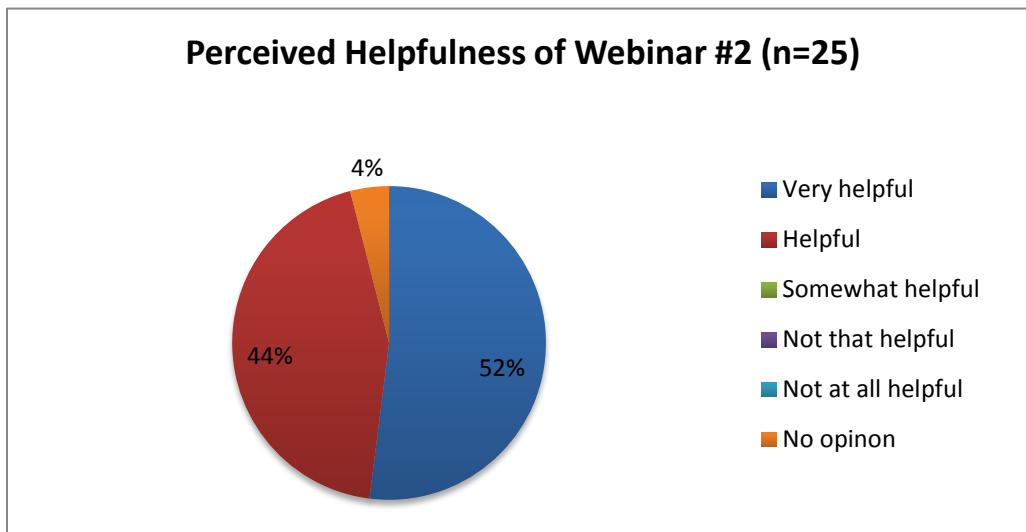
As shown in the figure below, the majority of participants found all topics helpful, with the highest ranked topics including considering different outcomes to measure, thinking about indicators and measures, and thinking about different outcome types.



The next figure shows that participants were most confident about how to determine the difference between program activities and program outcomes. Webinar #2 covered one of the more technical topics and overall, confidence was lower across all topics for this webinar when compared to others. However, over 50% of participants felt very confident or confident across all topics and very few (less than 10%) lacked confidence.

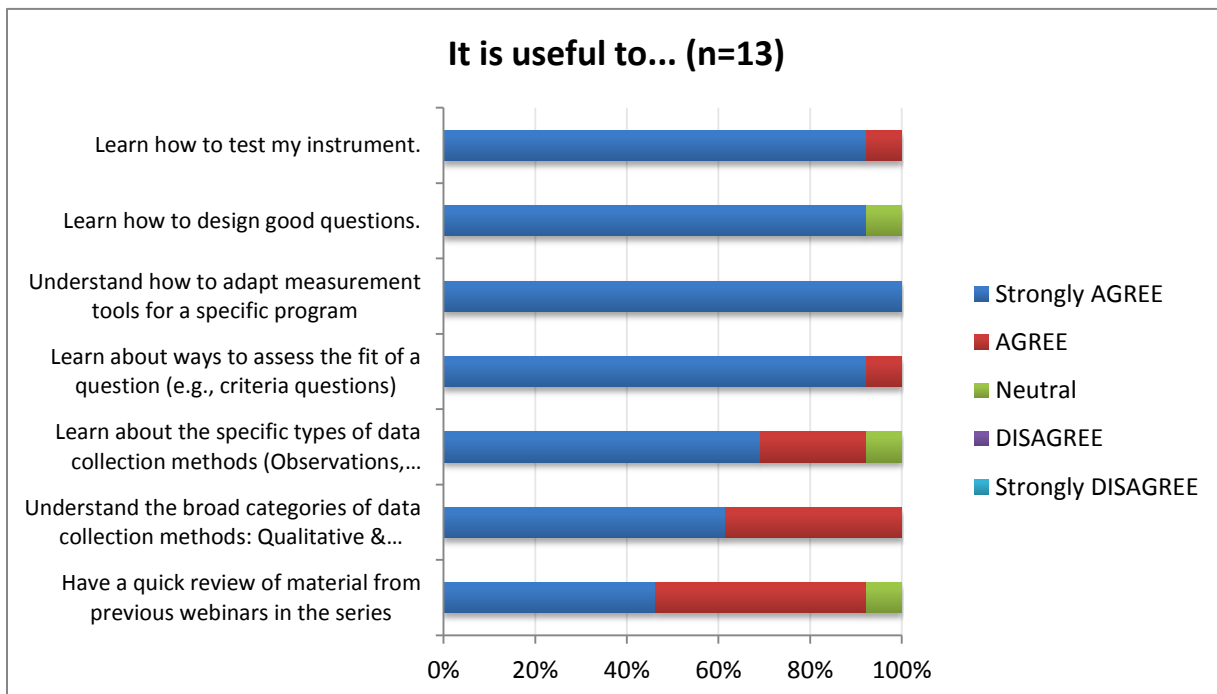


Overall, most participants (96%) viewed this webinar as very helpful or helpful.

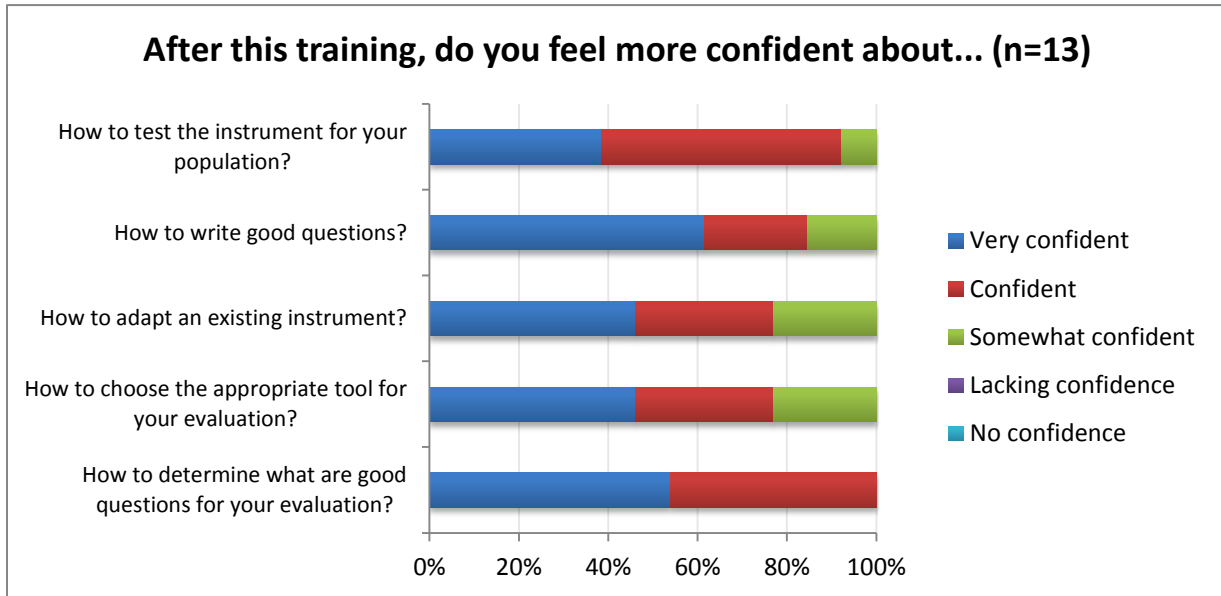


### Webinar 3 Post-webinar Survey Results

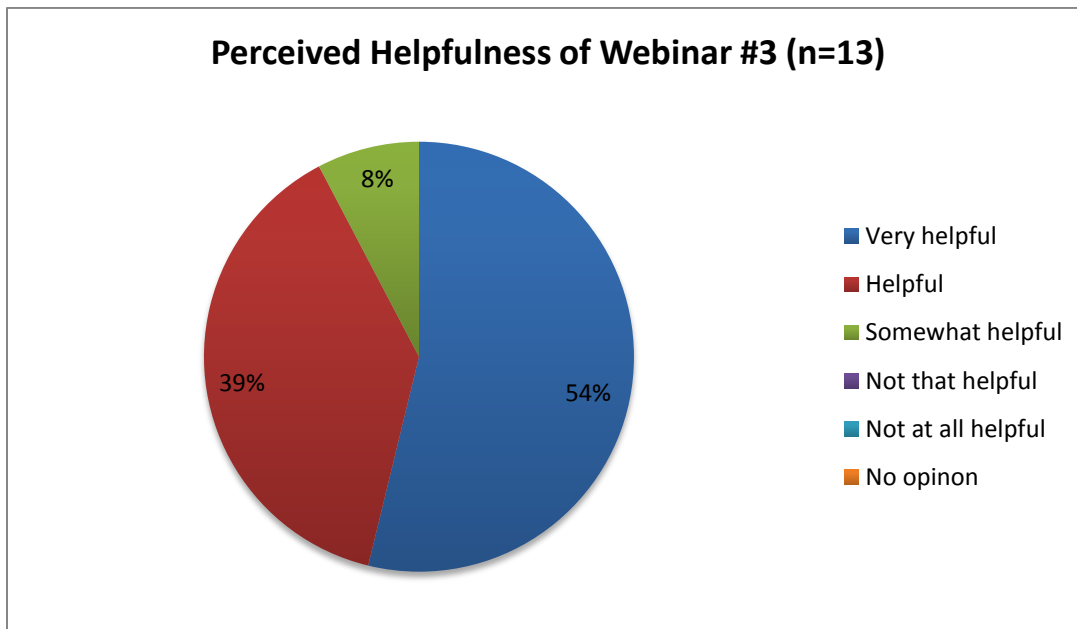
Participants found topics covered in Webinar #3 very useful. As shown in the following figure, all participants strongly agreed that it was useful to understand how to adapt measurement tools for a specific program and most strongly agreed that learning how to design good questions and learning how to assess the fit of a question was useful.



After Webinar #3, participants felt most confident about determining what might be good questions for their evaluation and how to test instruments for their target population:

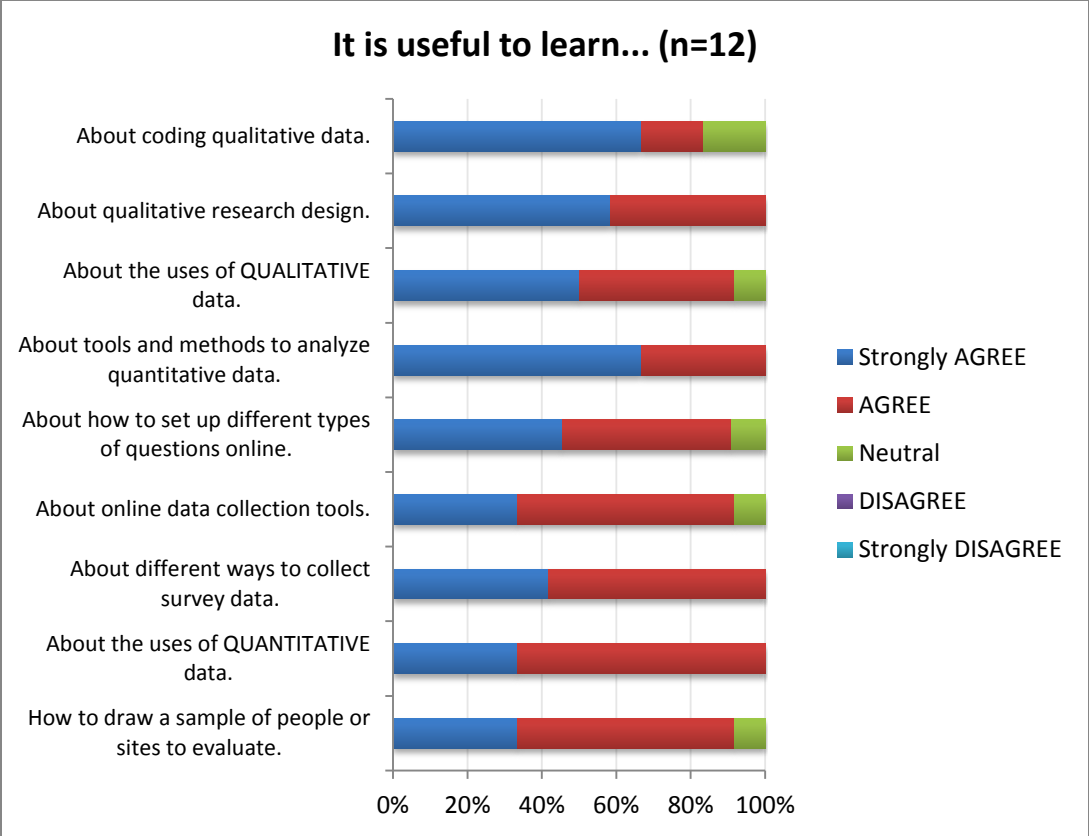


Overall, most participants (92%) found Webinar #3 to be very helpful or helpful:

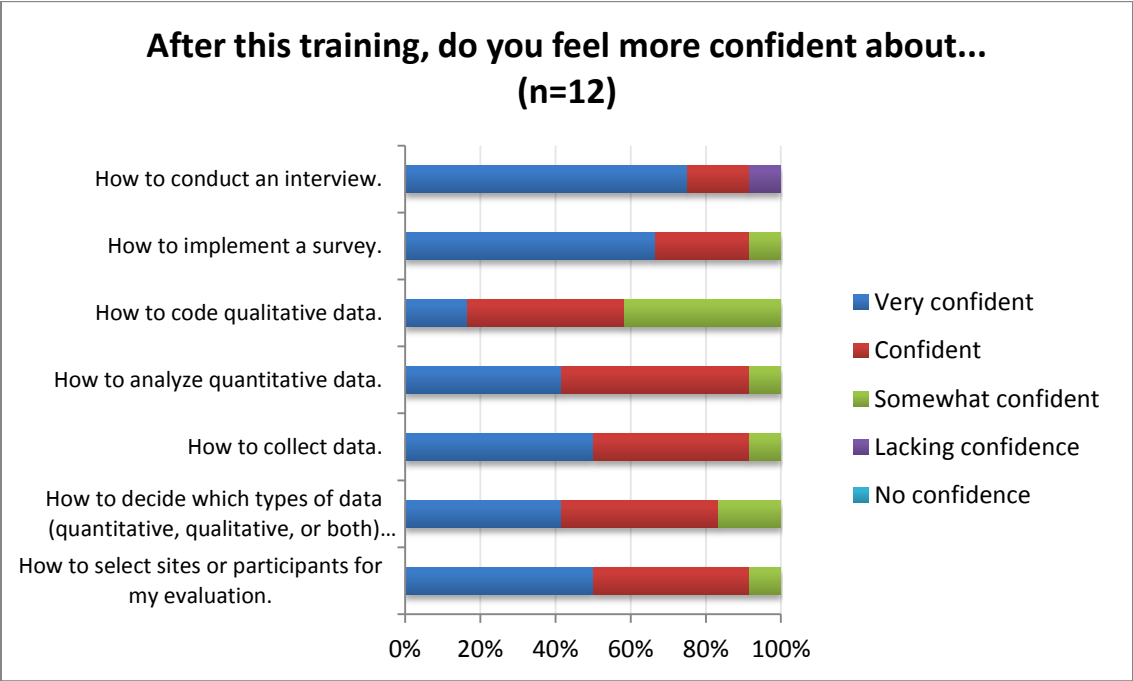


### *Webinar 4 Post-webinar Survey Results*

As shown in the figure below, most participants found all topics of Webinar #4 useful, with the majority strongly agreeing or agreeing that it was useful to learn about tools and methods to analyze quantitative data, qualitative research design, different ways to collect survey data, and the uses of quantitative data.

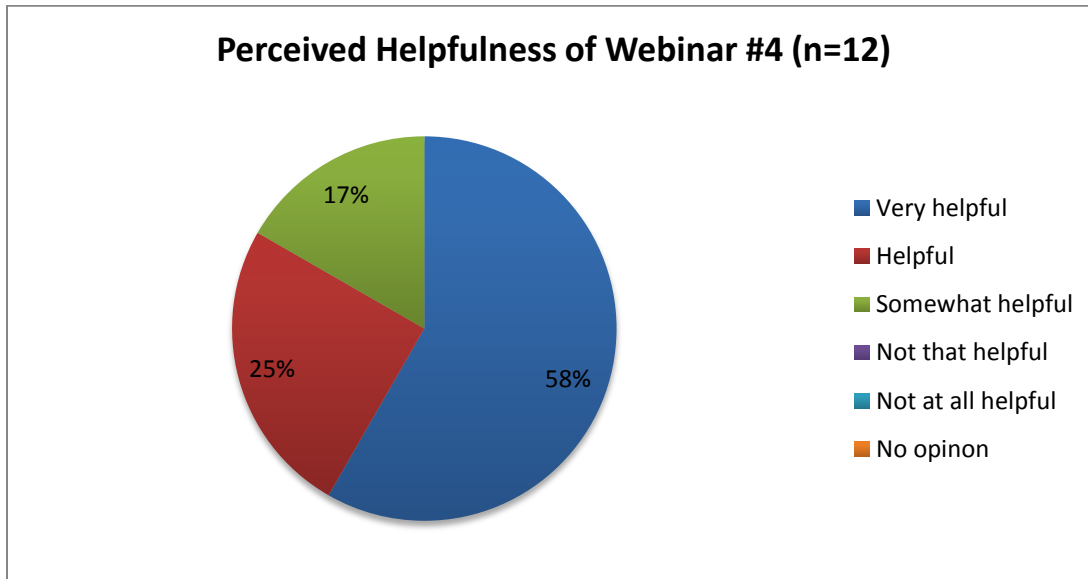


Most participants were confident or very confident about how to implement a survey, analyze quantitative data, collect data, how to decide which types of data to collect, and selecting sites or participants for their evaluation. Participants were less confident about how to code qualitative data. Some participants (less than 10%) lacked confidence in how to conduct an interview:



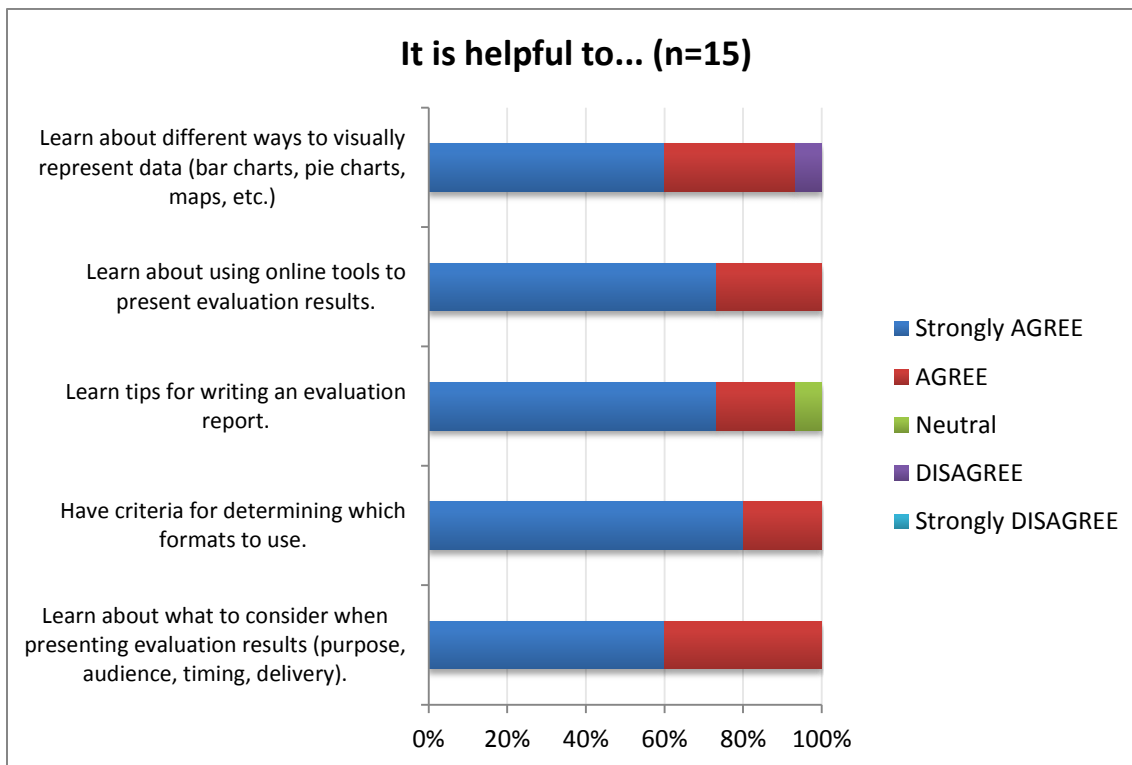


Most participants (83%) found Webinar #4 to be very helpful or helpful:

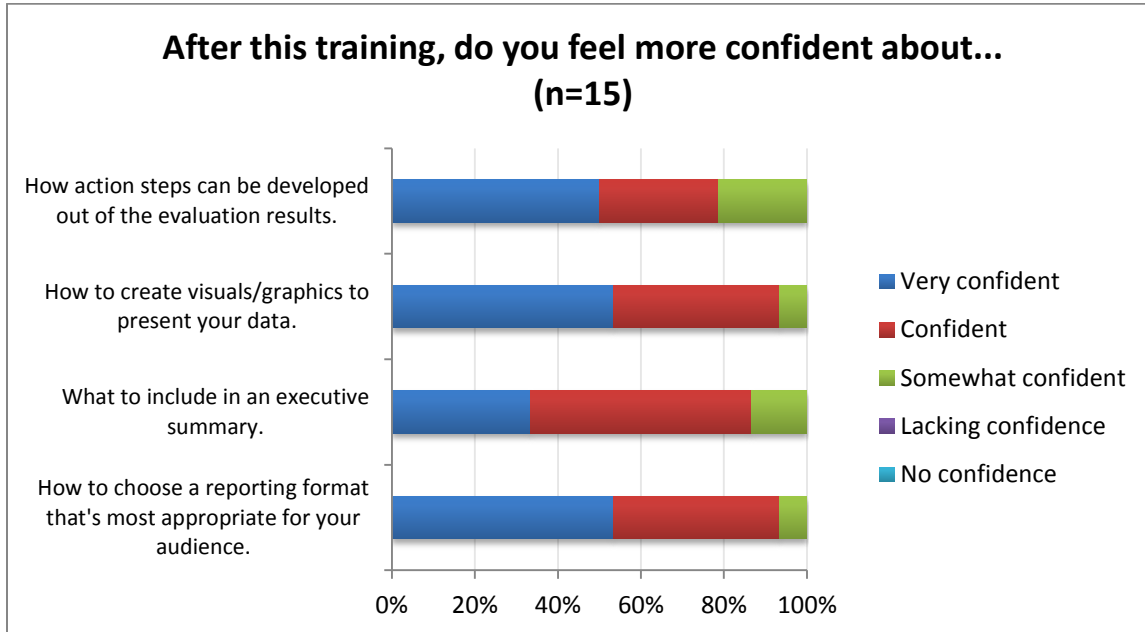


### *Webinar 5 Post-webinar Survey Results*

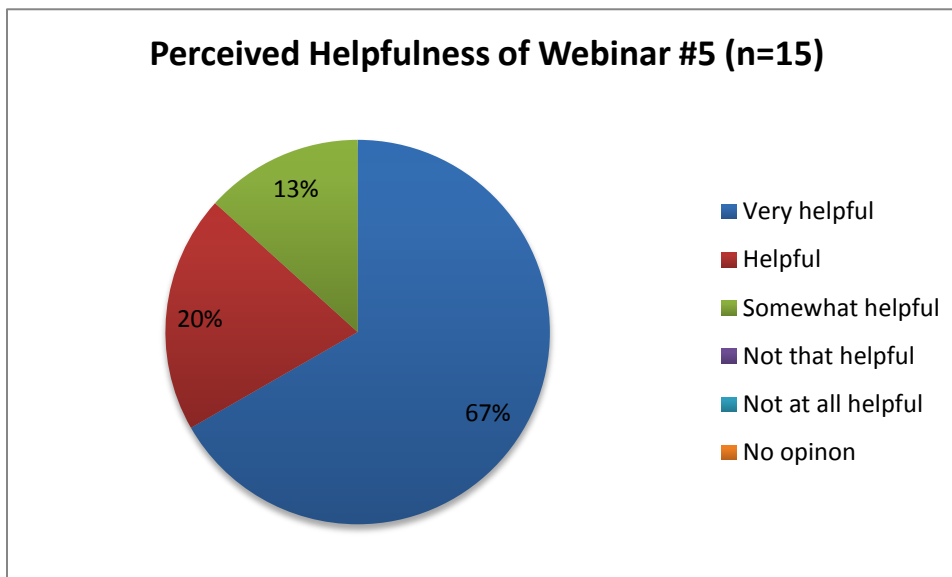
The following figure shows that most participants (over 90%) found most of the topics helpful, especially having criteria to determine which reporting formats to use and learning how to use online tools to present evaluation results.



As shown in the next figure, participants were most confident about how to create visuals and graphics to present their data and how to choose a reporting format that's appropriate for their audience. Participants were less confident about what to include in an executive summary and how to develop action steps out of evaluation results; but still roughly 80% or more indicated that they were confident or very confident.



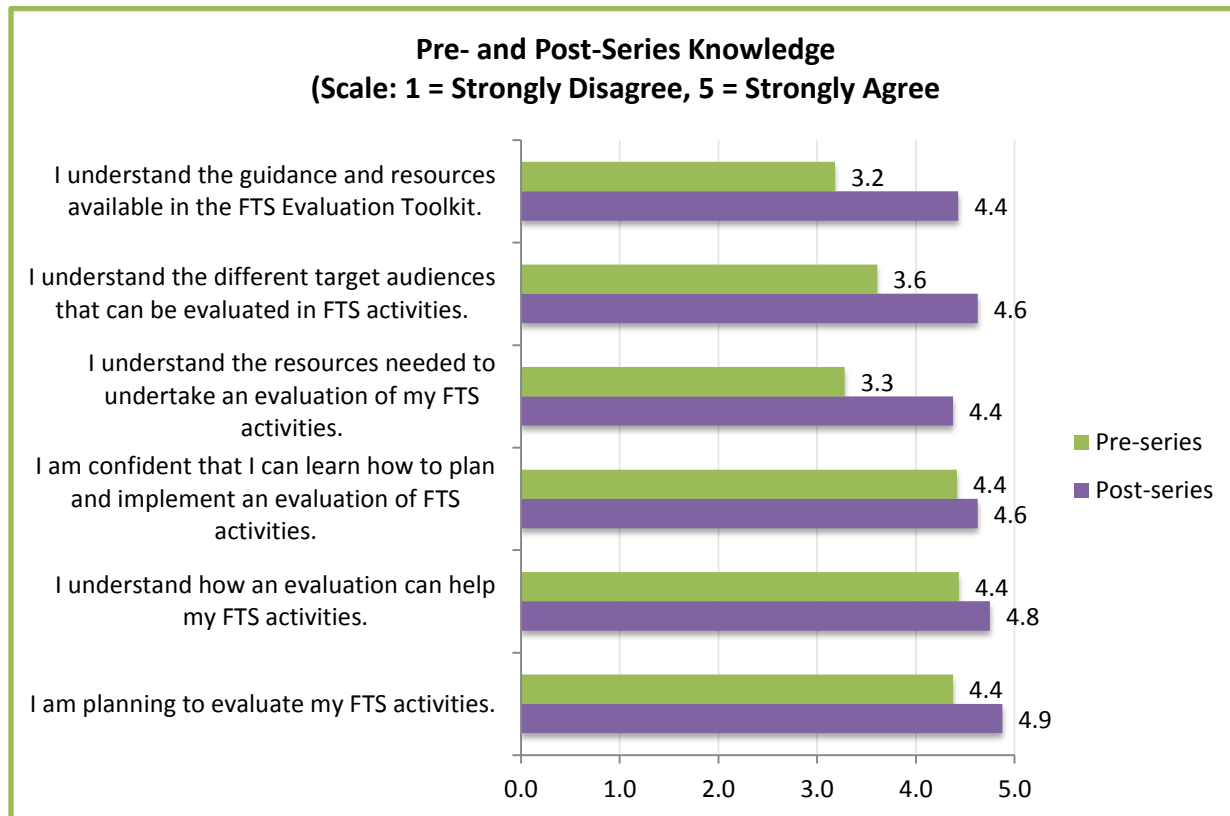
Overall, most participants (87%) found Webinar #5 helpful or very helpful:



### *Webinar Series Overall*

Participants were asked to rank six statements about their plans, confidence and understanding around evaluation activities before and after participating in the webinar series. The figure below

shows average responses on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 = Strongly disagree and 5 = Strongly agree. Participants ranked every statement higher in the post-series survey, indicating the most gains in understanding guidance and resources available, understanding the resources needed to undertake an evaluation and understanding the different target audiences that can be evaluated.



Participants also had the opportunity to provide feedback via open-ended questions throughout the survey. Below is a sample of some of the feedback received:

- “Thanks again! This is the highest quality and highest return on time invested for a webinar in which I have participated. Grateful for your time, sharing, and expertise.”
- “Very Clear and logical progression of information. Thorough, yet not overly complex.”
- “The content was very helpful and the delivery was well done.”
- “Great job of getting across information that I imagine is new to many of us.”
- “Realizing I should have started this long ago!”
- “Getting familiar with the language of this process and learning the steps. Also realizing a lot of my goals are long-term and to focus on the short and intermediate – VERY HELPFUL!”
- “Opportunity to stop and fill in evaluation tool; wealth of resources provided/links to actual measurement tools.”
- “Appreciate the thorough attachment documents and concise theory of change explanation.”

- “Content is challenging in a positive way.”
- “Valuable information to have.”
- “I liked the refresher on the Logic Model and especially the connection to the new F2S evaluation framework. This is so timely and helpful – the best webinar series I have been a part of yet with F2S (and I have been part of a LOT).”