



REGION 2: Southeast

Adams, Belmont, Columbiana,
Gallia, Jackson, Jefferson, Perry,
Pike, Washington

8

Total Grants
Awarded

19

Total Sites
Served

Belmont County Head Start: Cultivating Healthy Habits

Belmont County, OH

Early Childhood Education Centers



THE NEED

Belmont County's 7.4 Food Environment Index score lags behind state and national averages. With fresh produce often financially out of reach, local Head Start families face severe food insecurity and rely on cheap, processed foods. Consequently, nutritionist evaluations show that 29% of enrolled Head Start children are overweight or obese.

THE GRANT AT WORK

The Community Action Commission of Belmont County launched a nutrition and gardening initiative across 9 classrooms at 5 sites, directly serving 162 children from July 2026 through May 2027 in partnership with the Health Advisory Council and Belmont County WIC.

- **Monthly Healthy Snacks:** Children actively prepare and eat nutritious snacks, bringing recipes home to encourage family-wide dietary shifts.
- **Raised Garden Beds:** Every site installed raised beds, allowing children to select seeds, plant, and care for growing produce.
- **Curriculum Integration:** Staff incorporated gardening into daily lessons alongside the "I Am Moving, I Am Learning" program, which requires 30 minutes of daily physical activity.

COMMUNITY IMPACT

By combining hands-on agricultural education with healthy food preparation, the project equips 162 children and their families with practical skills to replace processed foods with fresh produce, building a sustainable foundation to reduce childhood obesity and improve lifelong community health.

Another Region 2 Success – K-12 School Elementary Physical Activity Initiative

"The Healthy Choices Mini Grant funding will help increase the amount of time elementary students spend being physically active while expanding access to age-appropriate physical activity equipment in schools throughout the county. By creating more opportunities for movement and providing the resources students need to be active, this grant will help promote healthier lifestyles, improve student well-being, and build a stronger culture of physical activity across our elementary schools."



CASE WESTERN RESERVE
UNIVERSITY
Mary Ann Swetland Center
for Environmental Health

Healthy Choices Mini Grants support healthy eating and active living strategies at food pantries, farmers markets, early childhood education centers, K-12 schools, and community gardens.

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