

FARM TO SENIOR INSTITUTIONS BUDGET REQUEST



Summary: Request \$5 million for a competitive grants program to facilitate local procurement of food by institutions serving seniors/elders. Grants of up to \$100,000 will go to organizations seeking to develop healthy offerings through local procurement. Priority will go to proposals sourcing from: local, small and socially disadvantaged farmers; and organic farms.

An Opportunity to Meet a Growing Need

Our older adult population is growing and many experience disproportionate rates of food insecurity, with 25% being economically insecure in Marin County alone. This budget request is timely and important to address: the lack of access to healthy food, and the fragmented distribution systems making it harder for family farmers to earn a living. These conditions are demonstrably worse during the COVID Pandemic. Increasing the percentage of locally grown food purchased by institutions will benefit the state's economy, public health, food and agriculture industry, and environment.

Built on Success!

The proposed pilot program is built on the federal Farm to School program that has been serving California for over 8 years and is advanced through the California Dep't. Of Food and Agriculture's Office of Farm to Fork. The Farm to School Initiative leverages impact by supporting local farmers, and increasing access to nutritious food, while shortening the distance between farm and plate. Bringing locally grown food into educational institutions has been shown to have a positive impact on students' diets and has been recommended by the CDC as a community strategy for combating obesity. Studies have shown that serving students more fruits and vegetables, especially when they are fresh, locally grown, picked at the peak of flavor, and paired with educational programming, has significant potential to improve students' receptiveness to produce. This increased consumption of fresh produce improves children's diet as a whole. Results from the Farm the School Initiative include;

- As local procurement increases farm to school programming matures, documented local sourcing reaches up to 50 percent of all produce purchases in season.
- Additional funding spent on purchasing local food has been shown to have a high job creation multiplier because money invested in local farms tends to circulate within the state.
- Creation and maintenance of jobs in the community and in the state; for every job created by school districts purchasing local foods, additional economic activity creates another 1.67 jobs.
- Each dollar invested in farm to school stimulates an additional \$0.60-\$2.16 of local economic activity.

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- Improvement in food service operations to support healthy outcomes, such as increased cafeteria offerings of fruits and vegetables; development of new seasonal recipes; changes in cafeteria waste management policies.

In addition, farm to hospital programs show the potential impact of the proposed program. A Kaiser Permanente Farm to Hospitals program resulted in nearly 50 percent of fresh produce that Kaiser Permanente purchases annually served on patient menus being sustainably produced and/or locally grown. Kaiser uses a Sustainable Food Scorecard to rate potential food/service vendors during bidding.

Successful Project Models

Eligible grantees will include non-profit groups operating: skilled nursing and assisted living facilities; congregants meal programs and housing programs. The following successful programs represent benefits the proposed State-wide pilot would bring on a larger-scale:

Congregate Meals Serving Elders with Local Sourcing:

For some 10 years Good Earth Markets has provided meals to 9 congregate meal sites focusing on organic and local food. Procurement includes local dairy and meat products. The program serves San Rafael, rural Pt. Reyes Station, and other communities.

Conscious Kitchen pivoted early in the CORONA Virus Pandemic from a focus on school children to preparing meals for seniors in need. Using its commercial kitchen space it now serves 125 seniors regularly with healthful meals delivered to their community in Marin City.



A partial list of organizations and coalitions in support of this program follows:

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