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Interfaith Sustainable
Food Collaborative

March 2021 Newsletter

Advocate for Farm & Food Chain

Workers!

ESSENTIAL WORKERS DESERVE PAID SICK LEAVE



TELL CALIFORNIA LEADERS TO
EXTEND PAID SICK LEAVE NOW!

Interfaith Food is supporting two efforts to support farm and food system workers vulnerable to impacts of COVID. These timely advocacy opportunities cover both the preventive approach, and when that is not successful, financial help for those who do get sick. Please join the Lideres Campesinas en California in asking Governor Newsom to prioritize farmworkers in accessing vaccines. Individuals are encouraged to sign on the petition/letter [at this link](#). The deadline is 3/15/21.

We are also calling on faith-based groups to support the Emergency Paid Sick Leave (AB 84 and SB 95) which will provide emergency sick-leave for farmworkers and others impacted by COVID. These workers, at California businesses with 25 employees or more, would receive up to 2 weeks of sick-leave. Friends Committee On Legislation is joining various labor groups to support the bill which could be acted on as early as next week. If your denominational advocacy team in Sacramento can sign on please be in touch with Steve Schwartz ASAP. A detailed copy of the sign-on letter is attached [here](#). It will be updated in the coming days.

Free Veggie Starts for Congregation

Gardens

This growing season, we are excited to announce that Interfaith Food will be offering free veggie starts for faith-based gardens in the Bay Area. Two of our staff members supported the build of a new greenhouse this Winter at one of our partner organizations, the Gill Tract Community Farm in Albany. We will continue to support their vegetable seeding efforts, and will be using some space in their community greenhouse to grow hundreds of starts that will be provided to faith-based garden sites at no-cost.

This month, we will be seeding parsley, lettuce, bok choy, chard and peas. We intend to do a first distribution of plant starts in early April. Our distribution reach includes Alameda, Sonoma, Contra Costa, Solano and Marin counties. If you are interested in receiving some veggie starts for your community garden, please contact Abby at 209-559-5779 abby@interfaithfood.org. Please get in touch by March 20th to reserve some veggie starts. We will reserve the plants on a first come, first serve basis.



Sprouting veggies!

Kosher and Halal Consumers Join Livestock Producers to Localize Marketing Relationships

This Sunday Interfaith Food will host its first ever workshop focusing on bringing together Jewish and Muslim consumers of Kosher and Halal meat with local livestock producers. The virtual workshop will include speakers representing: Jewish and Muslim religious guidelines for meat, as well as the ranchers seeking to access niche markets. To RSVP for the free, virtual workshop [CLICK HERE](#).

This event is part of USDA supported work to help small livestock producers increase income. Interfaith Food is developing a list of producers that we will share with faith-communities seeking to localize their purchasing. We are also aware of ranchers, including sheep ranchers that time their lambing for the Easter market, and we plan to promote these operations too. Can't participate in the workshop? Be in touch with Steve or Stephanie at (707) 634-4672 to discuss your interest in this topic.

Stimulus for Sonoma Fishermen and Families

Seeking: Additional Partners to Distribute Fish

Interfaith Food is distributing fish to communities in Sonoma county with a grant from Catch Together. This grant will help local fishermen struggling due to the COVID financial crisis, while also feeding our communities in a sustainable way. We have begun distributing more than \$40,000 of fish, and are looking to add to our current list of 6 faith-based partners. Please let us know if your congregation is interested in receiving fish to share with people in need in your community and the quantity of fish fillets you can store and distribute. There are two options for fish: frozen packaged filets; or whole de-headed scaled fish. If your congregation is making meals for an event that serves low income people we suggest the whole fish to utilize its entirety in a sustainable way that feeds more people. Those who choose the whole fish option will have priority in distribution. If you are interested in helping distribute fish please contact Stephanie Felton at 707-776-6143 or stephanie@interfaithfood.org or fill out this interest form: [Sonoma fish distribution partners](#).

Support Local Food Access for Low-Income Seniors

Interfaith Food is again leading an effort to secure \$10.4 million for state-wide Senior Nutrition programming. We urge your congregation and denominational advocacy team to endorse this California State Budget Request. For details of the proposal and to sign-on, click [here](#). To see a list of dozens of current endorsers, click [here](#). While adding your group's name as soon as possible is helpful, additions through mid-April will still make an impact.

Mark Your Calendar!

Mark your calendar for these upcoming events!

March 14th: Halal/Kosher Online/ Virtual Workshop, "Exploring Options for Relationships with Local Small Livestock Producers"

April 6th: Americorps National [Service Recognition Day](#)



New Market Match Partners Wanted!

In the past Interfaith Food has provide cash nutrition incentives for CalFresh purchases fruit and vegetable purchases from faith-based sites including CSA's drop-sites, produce stands. While we have not been doing that over the last year, we want to share that the Ecology Center is seeking new partners for their CalFresh incentive program. Farmers, CSA sites, farmers' market/farm stand managers, seeking to encourage CalFresh participants to buy local produce should contact the Ecology Center. The Ecology Center is accepting applications for new partners on the Market Match program until **Friday March 26th**. By becoming a partner of Market Match your customers will receive nutrition incentives for spending CalFresh at your site. Visit [The Ecology Center](#) to apply now!

Interfaith Food is Hiring!

Interfaith Sustainable Food Collaborative will be hiring a Communications and Reporting Associate, based in Sebastopol. For more information about this professional position, please contact our Executive Director, Steve Schwartz, at steve@interfaithfood.org.

Promoting Pandemic EBT

Thank you to everyone who attended our workshop earlier this month on how faith-based organizations can help thousands of children receive information about P-EBT. Look for more information from Interfaith Food over the next few weeks and get your congregation's team ready to spread the word!

Celebrate Americorps Week!

Americorps Week is 3/7 through 3/11 this year! We have regularly had Americorps VISTA's serve as a core part of our team. This year we have 3 great VISTA's. Learn more about them [here](#). We anticipate recruiting in August for VISTA's who would serve a year beginning late Fall, 2021.

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